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Henry Francis Lytle



Mason
A.A. 428.

A
COLLECTION
O F
DISCOURSES,
DISSERTATIONS,
AND
SERMONS.
In Two VOLUMES.

By the Late Reverend
JOHN JOHNSON, A. M.
Vicar of CRANBROOK in KENT.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:
Printed by EDW. CAVE in St. John's Lane,
for Mrs. MARY JOHNSON in the Year

M. DCC. XXVIII.





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A S E R

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D at

Canterbury School Feast.

With a P R E F A C E,

Shewing that Alphabetical Letters were never
used by any before *Moses*, and he first learned
an Alphabet from God.

By the late Reverend JOHN JOHNSON, A. M.
Vicar of Cranbrook in Kent.

N U M B. XI. 29.

—*Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and
that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.*

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year M. DCC. XXVII.

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P R E F A C E.

AT the Request of the Gentlemen assembled at this Feast *, I promised to print this Sermon preached before them: Accordingly I soon after transcribed it for the Press, and drew a Preface for it, and sent both to an eminent Divine, who had promised to revise them before they were published. But, this worthy Person dying within a few Weeks after, I could never recover those Papers from the Hands in which they were lost. And this Misfortune was the greater, because I had no Copy of the Preface, but that single one, which was now lost. And from that Time to this, I could never find Leisure to recollect the Substance of the Preface till within a few Months past.

Canterbury
* School
Feast.

I found it necessary to write a Preface, if it were only to support an Opinion hinted in the Sermon, viz. That Letters, or the Art of Writing and Reading, was first taught by God to Moses. By Letters, I mean Alphabetical Characters. I deny not, that the Egyptians, and perhaps other Nations,

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I shall comprize what I have to say on this Subject under these two Propositions, viz.

I. There is no Probability that Alphabetical Letters were used by any before *Moses*.

II. It is not probable that *Moses*, or any other Man, first invented an Alphabet by the Strength of his own Genius, but that *Moses* first learned it from God.

I. All will confess, that *Moses's* Writings are the most antient of any now extant;

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extant; all, I mean, whose Judgment is to be valued. Nor do I suppose, that any Man will undertake to assign the Name of any Writer, Book, or written Monument, more antient than *Moses*, though now lost; nor any of the same Age with him (except the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, mentioned *Numb. xxi. 14.*) and therefore probably written by one of the *LXX* Prophets, or however, by some of their Scholars. *Seth's Pillars* are now given up as mere Fictions by all inquisitive Men. And though the same cannot justly be said of the Pillars in the Temples of the *Phenicians*, and *Egyptians*, and the Inscriptions made on them; yet it still remains to be proved, that any Inscriptions in Alphabetical Letters on those Pillars, or any other Monuments of those Nations, were more antient than *Moses*. The two Nations now mentioned are most celebrated of all others among the *Heathen*, for the Antiquity of their Records, and their great Care in writing and preserving them. And it is indeed most highly probable, that they, being next Neighbours to the *Jews*, should first of all get the Knowledge of Letters from them, and by this Means be enabled to transmit Memorials of their own Actions to Posterity sooner than any

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other

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other Heathen People. Yet, by the general Consent of our best Historians and Chronologers, it may safely be affirmed, that till the *Greeks* were Masters of Letters, no such Thing was to be found as a consistent Series of regular History, excepting the sacred Records of the *Jews*. And the Reason of this is very obvious, *viz.* that they had no Memorials of antient Times but from Tradition, or Hieroglyphical Characters, saving what they had written since they had learned Alphabetical Characters, and therefore since the Age of *Moses*.

The old *Phenicians* seem to have been as polite a People as any in the World at that Time. They abounded in Arts and Wealth, by means of their great Trade by Sea, in which they probably exceeded all others. So soon as such a People as this once understood that their new Neighbours, the *Jews*, had an Art of registering whatever was said or done, by themselves or others, with so great Exactness that they could rehearse it many Months or Years afterwards, in the very same Words, as if it had been done or said in the same Minute that it was rehearsed; and of having their Thoughts conveyed to each other, at never so great a Distance, with
as

as great Certainty as if they were both bodily present in the same Room, they could not but be very impatient under the want of this Art. And it may be justly believed, that they left no Means untried, till they had drawn the Knowledge of this Secret from them by Rewards, or forced it from them by Severity. They could never want Opportunity of inviting such of the *Jews* as best knew this Art to teach it them for good Pay; or when any such *Jews* were by them taken Prisoners of War, they might extort the Knowledge of Letters from them by Terrors or hard Usage. And it is generally affirmed, by the most judicious Writers, that the *Phenicians* communicated this Art to the *Greeks*. Common Sense will not permit us even so much as to suppose, that the *Phenicians* had Letters before the *Jews* were settled in the Land of *Canaan*; because *Moses* had actually writ the History of the Pentateuch before this Time; whereas *Sanchoniathon*, the first Writer of the *Phenician* Nation, is by *Porphry*, his most zealous and able Advocate, set not much higher than the *Trojan* War, and is by some judicious Moderns believed to have been of the same Time with *Manetho* and *Berosus*, that is, after the Translation of the Pentateuch into

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Greek. For it is justly thought, that the Publication of the *Hebrew Antiquities*, in the most Universal Language, set all these three Writers at Work, to shew their own several Nations the *Phenicians, Egyptians, and Chaldeans*, not inferior to the *Jews* in Point of Age, or Origin, or any Thing else that was valuable.

If we allow *Sanhoniathon* to have been as old as *Porphyrus* would have him, that is, somewhat before the *Trojan Wars*; yet this will make him much younger than *Moses*, and will prove that the *Greeks* did soon learn the Skill of Writing and Reading from the *Phenicians*. For there are some good Grounds to believe, that *Epistles* were written, and some *Inscriptions* made by the *Greeks*, about the Time that *Sanhoniathon* wrote his History, that is, before the *Trojan Wars*, according to the present Supposition.

The three Historians last mentioned, give us a strong Proof of the natural Desire that is in all Men of a great Genius, to shew and illustrate the Antiquities, and great Acts, and Gifts of their own Nation. The same Emulation which prompted these Men to vie with the *Jews* in these Particulars, would have excited some of the more antient

antient Phenicians, Egyptians, and Chal-^{PREFACE.}
deans to have given us ample Histories of their Origins, Government, Wars, and Managements, if they had not wanted the Means of doing it, that is, the Art of Letters. And the very same Spirit that disposed the first Writers to enterprize such a Work, would have inclined others in succeeding Times to keep, and read, and be making Additions to them. But now look into what Parts of the World you please, you shall find no certain Footsteps of any such credible Histories, or Records before the Age of Moses, and nothing but confused Traditions, or Inventions, for two or three hundred Years after. And this Consideration carries a violent Presumption with it, that there was no Knowledge of Letters earlier than Moses.

The old Egyptians had a Reputation equal at least to any other Nation then in the World for Knowledge of all Sorts; and we cannot doubt but they had as many Domestic Affairs worthy to be transmitted to Posterity, as any People of the *Heathen* World. Their Pyramids still remain the Wonder of all that see, or hear of them. It is natural to suppose that, whatever other Ends the Builders had in erecting them, their principal Aim was by this Means to immortalize

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mortalize their own Names. If a Man could have been then found that could have made an Inscription in Alphabetical Letters, or that was able to write the Names of the Builders, we cannot in Reason doubt their Memory had been preserved in legible Characters. But now on the contrary, we are sure that, 2200 Years ago, *Herodotus* could not get any Information concerning the Names of the Builders, but from uncertain Report or Tradition. And if these Pyramids were built of the Bricks made by the *Israelites* under their Servitude, and just before their Deliverance from it, then it points to that particular Time of which I have been hitherto discoursing, and shews, that the *Egyptians* had not the Use of Letters, when *Moses* led the People out of *Egypt*. And though I would not be understood to deny that the *Egyptians* had an Alphabet before they were subdued by the *Macedonians*, or even as soon as the *Phenicians*; yet I dare affirm, that they made little use of it for the most proper End, that is, the Information of Posterity in Things of Moment. The very thin, imperfect Account we have of the Transactions of *Egypt* before this Time, is a very full Proof, that the *Egyptians*, when they were conquered, were

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were but modernly instructed in the ^{PREFACE.} Art of Letters. If they had had any Records of Value and Antiquity amongst them, the victorious *Grecians* would certainly have made themselves Masters of them: And it was in the Nature of this People to propagate all Knowledge that came into their Hands. Now 'tis well known what a poor, incoherent Skeleton of Tales the old *Egyptian* Memoirs, before this Country was reduced by *Alexander* the Great, contained, as they are found dispersed in *Greek* and *Latin* Histories. They are plainly such as might be justly expected from none but a Nation that was either altogether illiterate, or that so lately learned to write, that they had no well concerted Narratives of Affairs truly antient. And the same may be said of the *Assyrians*, and *Chaldeans*.

I take it for certain, that if these three famous Nations had just and credible Monuments in any Science, it was in Astronomy. And here we are told of Accounts prodigiously old preserved by the *Chaldeans* in particular. ¹ *Simplicius*

¹ Simplic. Comment. xlv. in *Aristotel*, L. 2. de coelo—
Διὰ τὸ μὴ πρὸ τῆς ὑπὸ Καλλιθένης ἐκ Βαβυλῶν πη-
φθείρας παρατηρήσεως ἀφικέσθαι εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, τῷ
Λεωπόλιδι τῷ ἐπισκῆψαντος αὐτῶ. Ἀστρονομίας
ὁ Πορφύριος χιλίων ἐτῶν εἶναι, καὶ ἑξακοσίων τριῶν
μικροῦ τῶν χρόνων Ἀλεξάνδρου τῷ Μακεδόνι συζομένης.
relates

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W relates from *Porphry*, that there were Observations of the Stars 1900 Years backward, sent from *Babylon* by *Calisthenes* to *Alexander* the Great, upon his Conquest of that City. * *Pliny* tells us, that *Anticlides* had discovered one *Menon*, in *Egypt*, to have made such Observations 15 Years before *Phoroneus*, the first King of the *Grecians*; That *Epigenes* had found at *Babylon* 720 Years Observations written on Bricks. * *Cicero* tells us, though not as if he believed it himself, that the *Babylonians* had Records of this Sort for 470,000 Years backward. Yet *Pliny*, at the same Time, though he is not commonly faulty in drawing less than the Life, assures us, that *Berosus* affirms these Observations not to have exceeded 480 Years. And

* *Plin.* Hist. Natural. L. vii. c. 56. Literas semper arbitror Assyrias fuisse: sed alii apud Ægyptios a Mercurio, alii apud Syros repertas volunt.

Ibid. Anticlides in Ægypto invenisse quendam, nomine Menona, tradit. XV. annis ante Phoroneum antiquissimum Græciæ Regem, idque monumentis approbare conatur. Ediverſo Epigenes apud Babylonios DCCXX annorum observationes Siderum coëtilibus latereulis inscriptas docet, Gravis Autor imprimis. Qui minimum Berosus, & Critodemus. CCCCLXXX annorum. Ex quo apparet æternus Literarum usus.

* *Cic.* de Divinat. L. i. Contemnamus etiam *Babylonios*, & eos qui Caucaſo cæli Signa servantes numeris, & motibus stellarum cursus persequuntur: condemnemus inquam hos aut stultitiæ, aut vanitatis, aut impudentiæ, qui CCCCLXX millia annorum, ut ipsi dicunt, monumentis comprehensa continent, & mentiri judicimus.

this

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this Account is certainly to be preferred before all the rest, as coming from one whose Business it was to do Justice to that Nation, whose History he was writing, and therefore not without great Cause to lessen their Fame, either as to their Antiquity, or Excellency in the Knowledge of the Stars. And our excellent *Hally* falls in with this last Account, when he tells us, "Nothing was done by the *Chaldeans* older than about 400 Years before *Alexander's* Conquest, that could be serviceable to the Determination of the celestial Motions." as he is cited by Dr. *Wotton* in his Book of *Antient and Modern Learning* CCXI; and he adds, "What the *Egyptians* did in Astronomy is less evident, no one Observation made by them being to be found in *Ptolomy*, excepting what was done by the *Greeks* at *Alexandria*, under 300 Years before *Christ*." Now I see no Cause to deny that these People did make Observations on the Motions of the Stars as early as *Porphyry*, *Anticlides*, *Simplicius*, (or any except *Cicero*, who never expected to be believed) did just before intimate in the Places by me alleged. It may safely be granted, that they did this even from the Times of the Patriarch *Abraham*, that is, about

1900

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1900 Years before *Alexander* the Great. But then they must have been wrote not in Alphabetical, but in *Assyrian*, or Astronomical Characters. And * *Pliny* says, *These Letters were ever in Use*: By *Letters* meaning those Notes, or Marks, by which Men of this Science have always expressed the Signs of the Zodiack, the Planets, and the several Aspects of them toward each other. And they were called *Assyrian* Letters, because Astronomy was first studied by that People, and they were the first who thus denoted their Motions, as ¹ *Cicero* informs us.

But since the Knowledge of the *Egyptians* is in the Scriptures mentioned as very considerable, and it is remarked of *Moses*, and in Commendation of him, that he *was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*; it may be asked, how that which I am now advancing doth comport with this Character of them? I answer; ² that for any Thing I have here asserted, the *Egyptians* might be the

* See the Citation from *Pliny* just above.

¹ Cic. de Divinat. L. 1. mox ab initio. Principio Assyrii---trajectiones, motusque stellarum observaverunt, quibus notatis, quid cuique significaretur memorie prodiderunt.

² Philo de vita Mosis, pag. 606. Edit. Par. Ἀριθμῶς μὲν ἔν, καὶ γεωμετρίαν, τὴν περὶ ῥυθμικὴν, καὶ ἀρμονικὴν, καὶ μετρικὴν διατριβήν, καὶ μουσικὴν τὴν σύμπεσαν, ἀπὸ τῆς χρήσεως ἑργαίων, καὶ λόγων ἐν ταῖς τέχναις, καὶ διὰ τὸς ποικιλοτάτας

the most wise and knowing in all human Sciences of any that were then upon the Earth. I doubt not but that *Moses*, being bred in *Pharaoh's* Court, learned there every valuable Accomplishment that was then to be had in any Part of the Universe; but especially Politicks and Architecture, in which the *Egyptians*, I suppose, equalled, if not surpassed all others. And this is sufficient to justify all that is said in Scripture, concerning the eminent Knowledge of the *Egyptians*.

Philo, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* from him, are very lavish in their fetching Instructors for *Moses* from all Quarters, and in all Sciences. They tell us, he learned Arithmetic, Geometry, Music of

τοπωτέρως Αιγύπτιοι οἱ λόγοι παρέδσαν, καὶ προσέτι
τὴν διὰ συμβόλων φιλοσοφίαν ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἱεροῖς
γράμμασιν, καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ζώων ἀποδοχῆς, ἃ καὶ θεῶν
παισὶν μαίριται· τὴν δὲ ἄλλην ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν
Ἕλληνες ἐδίδασκον· οἱ δὲ ἐκ τῶν πλοιοχώρων τὰ τὸ
Ἀσύρια γράμματα, καὶ τῶν τῶν ὑρανίων χαλδαϊκὴν ἐπιστή-
μην. Ταύτην καὶ παρ' Αἰγυπτίων ἐλάμβανε μαθηματικὴν
δὲ ἐν τοῖς μέγεσσι ἐπιτηδύονταν.

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. L. i. pag. 413. Ed. Oxon. Ἐν δὲ
ἡλικίᾳ γινόμενος [Μωσῆς] ἀριθμητικὴν, καὶ Γεωμετρίαν
Ῥυθμικὴν τε, καὶ Ἀρμονικὴν, ἔτι τε Ἱατρικὴν αἶμα καὶ
Μουσικὴν παρὰ τοῖς διαπρέπουσιν Αἰγυπτίῳ ἐδίδασκετο·
καὶ προσέτι τὴν διὰ συμβόλων φιλοσοφίαν, ἣν ἐν τοῖς
ἱερογλυφικοῖς γράμμασιν ἐπιδείκνυνται· τὴν δὲ ἄλλην
ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν Ἕλληνες ἐδίδασκον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ
ὡς ἂν βασιλικὸν παιδίον, ᾧ φησι οἶκον ἐν τῷ Μωσῶς
βίῳ προσεμάθαι δὲ τὰ Αἰγυπτίων γράμματα, καὶ τὴν
τῶν ὑρανίων ἐπιστήμην παρὰ τοῖς Χαλδαίων, παρὰ τε
Αἰγυπτίων.

all

PREFACE. all Sorts, and Hieroglyphics, from the *Egyptians*; that the *Greeks* taught him the whole Circle of Liberal Sciences (when it is certain that all the *Greeks*, in the Age of *Moses*, were rude, unlettered Savages). *Philo* says, the People of the neighbouring Countries taught him the *Assyrian* Letters, and the *Chaldaic* Knowledge of the Heavenly Bodies; but *Clemens* says, that these Sciences were taught him both by the *Egyptians*, and *Chaldeans*, and calls the Letters *Egyptian*. *Philo* farther says, he had Mathematics from the *Egyptians*; by Mathematics undoubtedly meaning conjectural Astrology. For this Reason *Clemens* omits this Passage, as having an ill Opinion of that pretended Science. The Words of *Philo*, as well as of *Clemens*, join together the Knowledge of these Letters; and the *Chaldaic Knowledge of the Heavenly Bodies*, only *Clemens* calls them *Egyptian*, instead of *Assyrian* Letters. As by the *Chaldaic Knowledge* can be meant nothing but Astronomy; so the Letters learnt at the same Time, and from the same Hands, can, in just Analogy, be no other than such as are used by the Students in that Science. *Clemens* calls them *Egyptian* Letters, not only because they were in great Use among the *Egyptians*, who were as conversant in the Stars as any

any other People, but because some ^{PREFACE.} ascribed the Invention of these Letters to the *Egyptians*, as *Pliny* informs us in the Citation, pag. 12, just above. If *Philo*, by the *Assyrian Letters*, had meant an Alphabet used by that Nation, he would certainly have brought Masters from that Country to teach it to *Moses*. Nor could there have been any Dispute what Nation was the Inventor of these Letters, if they were originally formed for the writing of the *Assyrian*, or *Egyptian* Languages. In a word, *Clemens* must have been guilty of a most intolerable Absurdity, in sending to *Chaldea* for Preceptors to teach *Moses* *Egyptian* Letters, if by these Letters he meant the common *Egyptian* Alphabet. This is just as wise as if a King of *France* should send for *Swedes*, or *Danes*, to teach a Prince of his own Blood to write, and read the *French* Tongue. But the Astronomical Characters were as perfectly known by the *Chaldeans*, as by the *Egyptians*. And there were probably some nice Variations between these People in their Formation of these Characters. And it was just that, in order to finish the Education of so great a Prince, he should have Masters of each Nation: I am aware that * *Diodorus Siculus*,

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PREFACE. and * *Clemens Alexandr.* do ascribe three Sorts of Letters to the *Egyptians*, the first common, or such as Men use in writing Epistles; the second sacred, or such as were used by their Priests only in religious Matters; the third Hieroglyphical. But they must be understood of the *Egyptians* in their own Age, who were really *Greeks*. *Diodorus*, and *Clemens*, knew no more of the *Egyptians* in the Age of *Moses*, than my Reader and I.

In fine, I can discern no Proof, nor Appearance of Proof, that any Man, or Body of Men, had the Use, or Knowledge of Alphabetical Letters before *Moses*, and therefore conclude this Head with the Saying of the only Author, so far as I know, who gives to *Moses* the Honour of being the first Man of Letters, I mean ¹*Eupolemus*, viz. *That Moses was the first wise Man, that he first taught the Knowledge of Letters to the Jews, that the Phenicians received it from the Jews, and the Greeks from*

* *Strom. Lib. 5.*

¹ Mox post ultimam citationem. ex Clem. Alex. *Strom.* i. pag. 413. Εὐπόλεμος δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, Βασιλείων τὸν Μωσῆ φησὶ πρῶτον σοφὸν γινώσκειν, καὶ (pro Γραμματικὴν, Γράμματα habet Eusebius, L. ix. *Præparat. Evangel.* c. 26. pag. 431.) Γραμματικὴν πρῶτον πῶς Ἰουδαίοις παραδόναι καὶ παρ' Ἰουδαίων Φοίνικας παραλαβεῖν, Ἕλληνας δὲ παρὰ Φοινίκων.

the

the Phenicians. In this I am fully per-^{PREFACE.}
suaded, he spake the very Truth. He does not expressly say, whether *Moses* invented Letters himself, or were taught them by God. But by calling *Moses* the first wise Man, he may be thought to ascribe the Art to the Strength of his own Genius, especially because he gives not the least Hint, that the Invention was in any Measure owing to God. And I am therefore sorry, that he who saw so much must at last be esteemed by me, as a Man that did not see the whole Truth. For he over-look'd that which I have laid down as the

II. Proposition, viz. That God taught *Moses* the Use of Letters. And this is what I am in the next Place to shew, when I have first premised one proper Caution, viz. that whatever Works of singular Providence are attributed to God, may justly be supposed to have been performed by the Ministry, or Subserviency of Angels. Thus, though the Law of *Moses* is generally spoken of as given by God, yet it is, in some Places of Scripture, called *the Word spoken by Angels*, Heb. ii. 2. and ordained by *Angels*, Gal. iii. 29. And some very good *Christian* Philosophers have been, and are of Opinion, that though God be the Maker of the Bodies of all Animals,

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yet

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PREFACE. yet that Angels are subservient to him in the Formation of them. I crave the same Liberty of Thought and Expression, that while I affirm God to have been the Author of Letters, I may be so understood, as to suppose he used Angels as Under-agents in the carving, or writing of them, and drawing Copies for the Use of *Moses*.

1. And all that hath been said under the first Head, to prove the want of Letters before *Moses*, does at the same Time tend to prove the Insufficiency of human Faculties to this Purpose. Above two thousand five hundred Years, by the shortest Account, had passed from the Creation to the *Exodus* of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*. During all this Time, the Intellectuals of Men were as clear and vigorous as ever after, and for the first fifteen or sixteen hundred Years their Lives longer than ours by nine in ten, which gave them great Advantages for the Discovery and Improvement of all Arts and Sciences. They must have been sensible of the miserable Inconveniences which they laboured under for want of this Art, and have made several Essays toward the attaining of it, but by Experience found it to be above the Reach of human Understanding. Some Men of great Worth have so aggravated

gravated the Necessity of Letters in human Life, as to assert, that it was impossible for Mankind to subsist without them, and for this Reason have concluded, that they are as antient as our first Parents. For they suppose that Matters of Fact may be proved from the mighty Conveniencies, or Inconveniencies, attending such Facts. And in Opposition to this, it is sufficient to observe, that the *Americans* had made a Shift to subsist without Letters till the 15th Century since *Christ*. And the *Goths* had liv'd on the grand Continent to the 4th Century without an Alphabet, at which Time *Ulphilas*, a Bishop, formed one for them. But though the Knowledge of Letters be not so absolutely necessary, as that Mankind could not subsist without them, yet they are so exceeding useful, and attended with so much Advantage, Benefit, and Comfort, that no Nation could continue patient under the want of them, who knew any possible Means whereby to get the Use of them.

2. To shew how far human Contrivance may go in the Art of Writing and Reading, I shall give an Example of it in the *Chinese*. Though it does not appear that any original Alphabet was ever made by mere human Skill, and Study, yet this People, famous for
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their Industry and Sagacity, have, for many Ages past, made their own Tongue capable of being written, and read; not by reducing Words to Syllables, and Letters, and by comprising them in an Alphabet of 22, or 23 Characters, but by contriving a Mark for every single Word; by which Means, instead of a few Alphabetical Characters, they have a Collection of 60, or 80,000 Notes, signifying as many single Words as their Language contains. See the Difference between an Art of Letters invented by Dint of human Wit, and Study, and the Perfection of that Art communicated to us from Heaven by *Moses* the Servant of God. By knowing, and remembering the Power of little more than twenty Characters, we are enabled readily to pronounce every Word, nay, every articulate Sound that can be invented, or imagin'd: This cannot be done by the *Chinese*, till they have learned, and do fairly retain the Figures, and Meaning of 3000 Letters for every one of ours. It is not my Business to lessen the *Chinese* Letters. I readily grant to them the Glory due to no other Nation, of inventing a Way of writing and reading their own native Language. But I may justly from thence take Occasion to magnify the divine Art taught by *Moses*, viz. of

of doing that by little more than twenty, PREFACE.
which the others could not do by less than three times twenty thousand. This last is the Art of Man, the other may justly be esteemed the Art of God, or at least, of his Angels.

3. Let us duly consider the Greatness of the Art it self; and we must be forced to confess it more than human. Some Inventions have been owing wholly to Chance. But this must entirely have been the Effect, and Contrivance, of Thought and Understanding. I would describe this Art, and shew wherein the Difficulties of it consist, and how invincible they would appear to a Man that was not Master of it, but was strongly disposed to be so by the Strength of his own Genius. Nothing already known seems difficult to vulgar Minds. But when I consider the many Curiosities of this Work, and the Perfection with which it is done, I cannot but think that the Finger of God, or however of an Angel, was in it. That we may the more effectually perceive the Difficulty of this Work, let us particularly consider, what a Man, that never saw or heard of an Alphabet, undertakes, when he would be the Author of an Alphabet to his own Language. Now to write Alphabetically, is to describe every per-

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fect Sound and Syllable of a Language, and every Particle of such Sound, or Syllable, in certain fixed Characters, and to do it with such Analogy, and Uniformity, that so often as the Sound, or any Particle of it occurs, it may be express'd in the same Characters. First then, he who would be the Inventor of an Alphabet for his own Tongue, without any Copy or Pattern to direct him, must make a Collection of all the perfect Sounds, or Syllables, contained in it. He hath no Repository in which to place them, but his own Memory; others may suggest the Sounds to him, but he can retain them no where, but in his Head. And where shall we meet with a Man that can persuade himself, that his Memory is so capacious, and retentive, as to have in Readiness, or to be able faithfully to recollect, such a vast Heap of incoherent Sounds, or Syllables, as are to be found in any Language. But let us suppose, that the Man being of a very extraordinary Capacity, hath Room for such a Collection in his Head; he must in the next Place consider, whether to assign a particular Character to every particular Sound, or Syllable, (as the *Chinese* have for every single Word) or whether he shall sub-divide every Syllable into several Sounds, half Sounds, and

and Tendencies to Sound, and make Characters to answer every one of them. It is great Odds, but he takes up with the first Method, as being most easy to the Inventor, though exceeding inconvenient to the Nation, by whom such Characters were to be used. This indeed would not be perfect Alphabetical writing, according to the Description of it just now given; for the lesser Particles of the Syllable would be express'd by no Characters at all, but every entire Syllable by an entire distinct Character. But it often happens to the best human Artists, that finding, upon Trial, their best projected Scheme to be impracticable, they are forced to take up with another, though less perfect, and not so well adapted to its End. But let us suppose, that the Brightness of the Man's Genius prompts him to choose the most beneficial, though the hardest Method. Yet it often happens, that the Courage of such daring Men is soon damp'd, and sunk, when once they are convinced, that the Burden which they have taken up is too heavy for their Shoulders. It is scarce to be conceiv'd but he must be discouraged, and give over, when he meets with Words, or Syllables, compounded of half Sounds, Sounds, and Tendencies to Sound, that the Man cannot tell how to number,

ber, or distinguish. A Man may easily perceive that there is a Mixture of imperfect Sounds in every Syllable; or that the whole Sound is complicated of several lesser. But justly to distinguish these imperfect Particles of Sound, and to express them in uniform Characters, so as to avoid all Confusion in Pronunciation and Writing, this is the principal Difficulty that will obstruct him in his Work. And by a general Survey of so many compounded Sounds, as his Memory may present him with, he will be ready to say, with what Menstruum shall I dissolve these Combinations, and Coalitions? With what Fire shall I melt, and separate these Concretions of the first Elements of Speech, and express each of them by such certain Marks, Figures, or Letters, as that they may be united again into one Syllable at first Sight, either by myself, or by others, to whom I shall communicate my Art?

But here I may be told, by some modern Proficient in Philosophy and Mathematics, that he himself is able to make a new Alphabet for any Tongue that he understands. And I readily grant, that any Man of common Sense, destitute both of Philosophy, and Mathematics, may be able almost extempore to draw a new Alphabet for any Tongue
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that he can well speak, if he have first PREFACE.
 been made acquainted with the Alphabet of some other Tongue, and the Art of reading and writing that Tongue is sufficiently known to him. For such a Man hath nothing to do but to form a Set of new Characters equal in Number to the old ones, and to assign to every one of them the same Power that some one of the old ones had. For the Shape of the Letters is the Thing the least difficult of any in making Alphabets. *Ezra* taught the *Jews* a new Way of writing their own Tongue, by substituting the *Chaldean* Alphabet, instead of the antient *Hebrew*. And I conceive that one Alphabet might have served all the old Orientals; as one and the same does, or may suffice ten, or more, of our present *European* Languages. Nay, I see no Reason why one Alphabet may not be sufficient for the whole Universe, with some small Variations in the Power and Signification of some few of the Letters. And from hence it follows in the next Place, that he who is to create an Alphabet for a Tongue, and People, that never had used any before, hath really a very easy Task, if he knows the Alphabet of any other Language. For if he chooses to give a new Shape to his own Letters, he may do it without

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said, we cannot but see the Difference PREFACE.
between making an original Alphabet, when none had ever been seen, or known before, which was what *Moses* had to do (if he had been able) and the forming a second, third, a tenth, or twentieth from the Alphabet of another Tongue, which may be used as a Guide, or Copy. And I conceive that as the first is exceeding difficultly, if at all to be accomplished by mere human Sagacity; so the other is a very obvious, and cheap Attainment.

I dare not deny but some of the extraordinary Men, whom these last Ages have produced, may have been equal to the Task of making an original Alphabet. But I take leave to observe that Exactness, and a distinguishing Nicety, which I have shewed to be principally necessary in the present Affair, was not the Talent of the Antients in the Age of *Moses*, or those that went before. And we are not without a clear Instance of this in their great Defects as to the Calculation of Time. It is confess'd by the most learned Men in this Respect, that the Form of the Year made use of by the antient *Jews* was wholly inartificial, made up of Lunar Months, and twelve Lunar Months falling eleven Days short of a Solar Year, every one of their com-
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mon Years began 11 Days sooner than the former, which, in 33 Years Time, would carry back the Beginning of the Year through all the four Seasons to the same Point again, and get a whole Year from the Solar Reckoning; so that every three, and sometimes every two Years, they were forced to intercalate a whole Month. Others believe, that their Year was a defective Solar Year, consisting of 360 Days only, and required not therefore so large an Intercalation by near an Half as the former. This is the only Year hinted by *Moses*. For from the 17th Day of the second, to the 17th Day of the 7th Month, he reckons 150 Days. By which Account his Months were of 30 Days each, and 12 of them made 360 Days only, *Gen. vii. 11. viii. 3, 4*. By the *Philippic* Account, introduced by the Conquest of *Alexander*, 5 Days more were added at the End of the Year. It does not appear that any Notice was taken of the odd Hours, till *Augustus* undertook the Reformation of the Kalendar, and settled it in all Parts of his Dominion. But what is more wonderful still is, that the antient *Jews*, in and long after the Times of *Moses*, wanted Skill and Penetration sufficient to calculate their Months. Every new Moon was a stated Feast. And if they had had any Cycles, Tables, or
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other Rules, or Methods, by which to ascertain the precise Time of the new Moon, the High-Priest, with his Officers and Servants, had saved themselves much Trouble and Labour, in their Endeavours to get the earliest Sight of her after the Change. For the antient Practice was, at the Time of the ending of the old Moon, and beginning of the new, to send Men from the Tabernacle, or Temple, to climb the highest Hills, and Eminencies, on purpose to have a View of her so soon as possible after she was come from her Conjunction with the Sun. And Devotions on this Occasion never began, till some of these Messengers had return'd, and made their Report that they had actually seen her. And Dr. *Spencer* hath shewed that the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, of old did generally begin their Months not from the actual Conjunction, but from the first Phasis or Appearance of the new Moon; for which purpose they had Officers appointed to discover it as soon as possible, and to notify it to their Superiors. Now it is scarce credible, that they would have taken this Course on any other Account but their professed Ignorance of the precise Time of the Change. It may be justly acknowledged, that when such a Practice hath for some Ages prevailed,

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prevailed, it may be continued in Regard to antient Custom; but it is not to be conceived that it should first be taken up on any other Foot, than want of Knowledge. It concerns all Nations to have their Years and Months, rightly calculated, at least, not to have any enormous Mistakes to prevail, so far as they know how to prevent, or cure them. The *Jews* had their special Reasons to be as nice and solicitous, in stating the Course of their Years and Months; because their Feasts could not be observed in their proper Seasons, if there were any gross Errors in their Calculations. And if the *Egyptians* had been expert in these Matters, the *Jews* could not have been at a Loss in their Regulations of Time. For it is certain, that *Moses* had all the Wisdom, and Learning, that they could communicate to him. And if *Moses* had ever been Master of this Art, he would undoubtedly have left sufficient Instructions with the Priests, and Levites, to continue their Periods and Successions of Time, in a just Order. And though it pleased God by supernatural Means to teach *Moses* the Art of Reading and Writing, that so the great, and momentous Revelations made to him might be faithfully recorded for the Benefit of all future Generations; yet he did not

not esteem the constant keeping of their Feasts at the Times appointed to be a Thing of so great Consequence. No Man of Sense will wonder that God made a plain Difference between the observing of Days, and Times, and the Preservation of his own Laws and Promises given to his People, and therefore did not communicate to *Moses* the Art of making a Perpetual Almanack; though he at the same Time thought it worthy of his Care to enable him, by his own Direction, to be a Penman of his Word and Will. It may be added, that God foresaw, or actually knew, that the true Course of Time might be, and would gradually be discovered by human Art and Industry: But he saw the Invention of Letters to be above the Reach of the Men of that Age, not much versed in abstracted Speculations. And if he saw it possible to be attained by Men of a brighter Genius, and better exercised in the Art of Thinking, in some future Times; yet in Mercy he thought fit not to defer the bestowing on his People so great a Privilege as this of Writing and Reading, especially because he had Laws of his own, now forthwith to be promulged amongst them. He knew they could not be faithfully preserved without Letters; and Letters could not be known, and brought into Use,

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Use, unless he himself, by some supernatural Means, would convey this Favour to them. And it is not in the Nature of Things probable, that they who could not certainly adjust the Number of Days and Hours in a Year, or in a Month, could ever, by the Dint of their own natural Parts, be able to express all articulate Sounds in fixed Characters, or that they who could not distinguish between the Beginning of one Year, or Month, and the End of another, could yet, without any Help from above, design, in legible Characters, all the Variations and different Sounds of human Voice.

But the grand Objection remains still unanswered, I mean, that *Moses* no where expressly informs us, that Mankind, down to his Time, was without Letters; or that he himself first taught Men the Use of them, much less that he was instructed in this Art by God, or an Angel. My Answer to this will, I hope, set this whole Matter in a true Light. And,

1. It is just and rational to believe, that he who hath recorded the first Shepherd, Musician, and Artificer in Brass and Iron, *Gen. iv. 20---22.* would not have neglected to tell us who was the first Writer, if there had been any before himself. And though *Moses's* Modesty restrained him from speaking largely,

ly, and in Words at length, of his being ^{PREFACE.} the Instrument of conveying so great a Benefit to the World; yet I am humbly of Opinion, that in the several Parts of his History he hath said enough to let us know, that he was the first Master of this Art, and that he owed the Knowledge of it to divine Goodness.

2. I know not any just Cause why the Law should be written by God, or by an Angel at his Command, except it were for want of a Man that could well perform this Part. This could give no Addition of Authority to the Law, especially after it had been published in that astonishing, miraculous Manner at Mount *Sinai*. What was done there, was done in the Eyes and Ears of the whole Nation. But the Law was written by God, or his Angel, in Secret, without any one Witness, and could not therefore be intended to give any farther Testimony to what was written. The true writing of the Original was indeed perfectly adjusted, and precisely ascertained to all future Ages, by God's giving a Copy of it, as I may say, under his own Hand. But this, I conceive, had been done altogether as effectually by God's dictating every Word to *Moses*, and inspecting his Writing, and declaring the Authentickness of it, if *Moses* had been capable of

performing the Part of an Amanuensis. Therefore the most probable Reason of God's causing the Law to be written, was that *Moses*, by following that divine Copy, might become a true Penman.

3. God himself expressly declares, for what End he had written his Laws on Tables of Stone, *Exod. xxiv. 11, 12. Upon the Nobles, or chosen Men of the Children of Israel, he laid not his Hand: Also they saw God, and they did eat and drink. And the Lord said unto Moses, come up unto me into the Mount, and I will give thee the Tables of Stone, and the Law, and Commandments, which I have written, that thou mayst teach them.* By them we cannot understand the Laws and Commandments, but only the Nobles, or chosen Men, as every one that knows the Hebrew Pronouns cannot but see. *Moses*, long before this, had so learned the Laws of God, that he was qualified to teach them to the People, and he did so. For thus much he declares to his Father-in-Law in these Words, *I do make them know the Statutes of God, and his Laws, Exod. xviii. 16.* But now God promises *Moses* to enable him to do something more, *viz.* to teach the better Sort to read and write them. For how could it be said, that God wrote them with a Design that others

others should, by this Means, be taught, unless by *teaching* he meant instructing them to read and write them; especially since, before any mention is made of these Tables, *Moses* was able to inform Men in the Commandments themselves, and indeed they had been published to the whole Nation, *Exod.* xix, xx.

4. But what most of all deserves our Notice in that Text, *Exod.* xxiv. 12. is this, that *Moses* was not by God esteemed sufficient to teach the Nobles, or chosen Men, before he had received the written Tables from the Hands of God, and brought them down from the Mount. This I think clearly implied in these Words, *And I will give thee the Tables of Stone, that thou mayst teach them them*, that is, *the Nobles, or chosen Men*. The Nobles plainly could not read, nor could *Moses* have taught them without these Tables.

5. It does not follow that before the Time of *Moses* going into the Mount to receive the Tables of Stone, he was therefore perfectly rude and ignorant of Letters. Nay, we know that *Moses wrote all the Words of the Lord*, that is, the Substance of all that had been delivered, *Exod.* xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii. before he had been invited into the Mount to receive the written Tables, *Exod.* xxiv. 4. Nay,

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sent him, so the LXX justly render this ^{PREFACE.} Text, *Exod. iv. 28.* There was nothing but these Tables, which *Moses* might not have shewed his Brother in any other Place as well as *Horeb*. As *Aaron* has several Times been with *Moses* in the Mount, so *Hur*, once at least, had been with him on the Top of it, *Exod. xvii. 10.* therefore these two had some Opportunity of getting some Knowledge in this Art. Nay, LXX of the Elders had the Privilege of going into the Mount, together with *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and of seeing the symbolical Presence of God, *Exod. xxiv. 1.--9.* and it cannot be believed, that they who were honoured in so high a Manner as to see God's Presence, should be denied the Sight of the written Tables. And though their View of them was too transient to give them any tolerable Idea of the whole Art of Writing, yet it was sufficient to raise in their Breast a Curiosity and Emulation of being let into this Secret. Therefore when God commanded *Moses* to come up into the Mount, for 40 Days together, he says to the Elders, *Tarry ye here for us, till we return again to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Who [would be] a Master of Words, let him come to them.* And this I may call a

literal Translation. And a *Master of Words* seems an apt Expression for what we now call a *Man of Letters*. He desires all of the Elders that had any Inclination to learn Letters, to associate themselves with these great Men, who were ready to communicate what Attainments they had in this Art, *Exod. xxiv. 14.* These seem to be the LXX that are afterwards said to prophecy, *Numb. xi.*

6. Yet in all this Time *Moses* himself was not an Adept in the Art of Letters; no, not after he had spent the first 40 Days in the Mount, and had the two Tables delivered into his Hands according to God's Promise, *Exod. xxiv. 12. xxxi. 18.* For though God no where reproaches him for want of Skill and Diligence in the Essays that he had made in Writing, because he had done it in the best Manner he could. Yet we have a sufficient Intimation of his Defects in God's calling him up into the Mount a second Time. For it will be hard to say for what Purpose he was obliged a second time to be 40 Days in the Mount, except it were to perfect himself in the Art of Writing; which carries a strong Implication, that hitherto he was defective in this Point. He was to have the Tables of the Commandments continually before his Eyes; and

and how could he better imploy his vacant Time, than in scanning and passing a Scrutiny on every Syllable and Letter of them, and in giving Specimens of his Improvement in transcribing the Original? Accordingly upon God's seeing *Moses* in the Mount this second time, he thus bespeaks him, *Write thou these Words; for after the Tenour of these Words I have made a Covenant with thee, and with the Children of Israel, Exod. xxxiv. 27.* And it follows, *ver. 28. He was there with the Lord 40 Days and 40 Nights---and he wrote upon Tables the Words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments.* Thus God gives him 40 Days Time to write his Covenant and Commandments, and that he might do it with Leisure from other Business, and full Application of Mind, he keeps him with him in the Mount. And for an Attestation that this last Performance was just, and to shew by what Means it became so, *the Skin of his Face shone*, as a sure Token that the divine Power and Spirit dwelt within him, *Exod. xxxiv. 29, &c.*

7. Till now it does not appear that God afforded *Moses* any inward Assistance of the Holy Spirit toward the teaching him Letters, but left him to his own good Genius and natural Parts. I can't indeed

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 indeed conceive, how *Moses* having the Commandments by Rote, could learn to read *Hebrew* only by comparing the Words pronounced with the Words written. It seems highly probable, that an Angel gave him the Alphabet of the *Hebrew*, or some other Way, unknown to us, became his Guide, or Instructor. For without this, all the most elegant Characters must have been dead Letters to him. But the teaching Angel did not sufficiently condescend to his human Capacity. And when it did appear that in a Twelve-month's Time *Moses* was not yet perfect Master of this Art; and the many new Laws which God was giving, required an Amanuensis to record them with all possible Fidelity and Exactness. God determined at once to finish *Moses* in the Art of Reading and Writing, by the inward Documents of the Spirit; as he likewise did *Bezaleel*, and *Aholiab*, for the building and finishing of the Tabernacle and Ark. We are told, *Numb.* xi. 25, 26. that the Lord took of the Spirit that was upon *Moses*, and gave of it to the LXX Elders, and to *Eldad*, and *Medad*; that is, the Splendor of *Moses's* Face was communicated to them, and together with it the inward Instructions of the Spirit, in such Proportion as was necessary to render them

them, under *Moses*, able Ministers of the Letter of the Law. PREFACE

Upon the whole, it seems sufficiently clear, that the Law was writ on Stones by Divine, or at least, Angelical Art, that *Moses* might from thence be taught the Use of Letters; and that the Men of greatest Quality in the whole Nation were to learn this Art from him; and that *Moses* himself, with all the external Assistance that God afforded him, yet became not a perfect Master of Letters, till God had inwardly enlightened him for this Purpose by the Holy Spirit; that though *Moses* had made several Essays in Writing before he was put under the Conduct of the Spirit, yet there is just Cause to believe, that, without divine Illumination, he could never have become a perfect Master of Words and Letters, the Founder of all true Learning, and thereby the greatest temporal Benefactor, that ever Mankind yet had.

But it hath lately been asserted, by the very worthy the Dean of *Chichester*, that the Book of *Job* is more antient than *Moses*, in his second Dissertation annexed to his Book of *Prophecy*. And the Consequence is unavoidable, that if this Book be older than *Moses*, then the Use of Letters is so too. I therefore
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crave leave to consider, on what Grounds this Supposition is built. And the Sum of what is offered on this Head is in pag. 235, viz. "That in the whole Book of *Job* there is no mention of the Law, nor so much as one distant Allusion to any Rite, or Ceremony, of the Law, or to any Piece of History later than the Law." Now

1. Let this be granted, yet I do not see how this Consequence can be drawn from it. For sure no Man will say, that every Book wrote since the Pentateuch must of Necessity have some Citation, or Reference, from, or to the Pentateuch. Let us suppose the Book of *Job* to contain nothing but Historical Matter of Fact. And then, if nothing were said, or done, relating to *Moses's* Law, the Narrator had not been faithful, if he had affirmed any such Thing to be said, or done. On the other side, let us suppose the Book of *Job* to have been but a Drama. Yet the Author of it might have had so strict a Regard to the Laws of Decorum, as not to make any of his five *Arabian* Interlocutors say any Thing but what exactly fitted their Persons and Characters. And what Necessity was there, that they who acknowledged no Law but that of Nature, should be made to speak of the Law of

of *Moses*? If the Author of *Job* was himself an *Arabian*, there is no Reason to believe that he had so great an Esteem for *Moses*, as to think his Book would be imperfect, because he mentioned nothing of him, or his Works. If the Author of *Job* was himself a *Jew* (of which I cannot doubt) yet he might think it proper to keep close to the Laws of Personation, and not permit his *Arabians* to speak like *Jews*. On whatever Foot you put the Case, I can see no Necessity of his alluding to the Books of *Moses*, even though he were a thousand Years his Junior.

2. Notwithstanding what is said in the former Paragraph by way of Concession, yet I am fully persuaded, that the Author of the Book of *Job* alludes to a very considerable Piece of History later by many hundred Years than *Moses*, or his Pentateuch. *Job xxxvi, 8,---11.* is the Passage to which I refer; the Words are these: *If Kings be bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of Affliction, then God sheweth them their Work, and their Transgression, that they have exceeded. He openeth also their Ears to Discipline, and commandeth that they return from Iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their Days in Prosperity, and their Tears in Pleasure.* Now the

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the History of *Manasseh*, King of *Juda*, exactly answers the Case here put by *Elibu*. He had been a very wicked Prince, and was overpowered by his Enemies, and put in Chains, and kept Prisoner at *Babylon*. He was converted by the Admonition of Seers sent from God, dismiss'd from his Confinement, restored to his Freedom and royal Dignity, and reigned in great Splendor for many Years after. I am very much mistaken, if the History of *Manasseh* be not singular, without any Parallel in any Monument of Antiquity, either Sacred or Profane; and that therefore (though it be delivered by *Elibu* hypothetically, yet) the Author of the Book of *Job* had *Manasseh* particularly in his Eye; and has thereby mark'd out the Age in which this extraordinary Book was written, that is, about the Time of the *Babylonian* Captivity. For that this Author survived *Manasseh*, and saw the miserable Reigns of *Amon*, *Jeboabaz*, and the Age down to *Zedekiah*, seems probable from the Verses immediately following, viz. 12,---14. *But if they obey not, they shall perish by the Sword. But the Hypocrites in heart heap up Wrath; they cry not, when God bindeth them. They die in Youth.* *Amon*, and probably *Jeboiakim*, were slain by the Sword, 2 *Kings* xxi. 23. xxiv. 1,---6. It is to be

be feared, they were all *Hypocrites* in swearing Fealty to the King of Egypt, or *Babylon*, and not keeping it. *Jehoahaz*, *Jehoiachim*, and *Zedekiah*, were actually bound in Fetters under their Captivity; but they did not, with any Measure of Penitence, or Devotion, cry to God. *Amon* was but twenty-four Years old, 2 *Kings* xxi. 19. *Jehoahaz* little more than twenty-three, *ch.* xxiii. 31. *Jehoiachim* thirty-six, *ver.* 36. *Zedekiah* thirty-two, *ch.* xxiv. 18. *Jehoiachin* was little more than eighteen at the Time of his Captivity, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8. he continued indeed 37 Years after his Captivity under Imprisonment worse than Death to a generous Mind, 2 *Kings* xxv. 27. The Year or two added to his Life by his Enlargement in the Reign of *Evil Mero-dach*, will scarce make him equal to *Amon*, or *Jehoahaz*, in the true Account of Living, therefore all these *died* comparatively young. And to shew us what great Occasion there was in that Age for such Reflections as these, this Author hints all this in fewer Words, *ch.* xii. 19, 21. *God leadeth Princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the Mighty: He poureth Contempt upon Princes, and weakeneth the Strength of the Mighty.* All this put together is a fair Intimation of the Times when this Book was written,

PREFACE.

written, viz. toward the latter End of the Century immediately preceding the *Babylonian Captivity*, within which Time six of the Kings of *Juda* either died in Battle, as *Amon*, and *Jehoiakim*, or were taken Captive, and laid in Fetters, as *Manasseh*, *Jehohaz*, *Jehoiachim*, and *Zedekia*, to say nothing of pious *Josiah*, who perished in War against *Pharoah Necho*, King of *Egypt*. And upon this Foot we can easily account for the late Appearance of *Job's* Name in the Books of holy Scripture. *Ezekiel* is the first that mentions him, and he wrote under the Captivity. The Reason is plain upon what is here laid down, viz. that his Name and Story was not known till about 10, or 20 Years before. If he had been prior to *Moses*, it is scarce credible, that in almost a thousand Years Time not one single Writer should think *Job* worthy of their Notice. And the more fully assured the worthy Dean is, that the Resurrection from the Dead is clearly revealed in this Book of *Job*, the more sure he may be, that it was not published till about the Times of the Captivity. For in the earlier Ages we have rather Hints, than plain Directions for this Doctrine.

3. If

3: If there were no Allusion to any Rite; or Ceremony, or to any other Historical Fact in the Writings of *Moses*, yet if there be some plain Imitation in the Book of *Job* of what was done in a more lively and glorious Manner in the Times of *Moses*; in a Word, if the Cloud of Glory, the symbolical Presence of God, which was a standing Miracle, during the Travels of *Moses* and the *Israelites* through the Wilderness; and often exhibited itself after their Settlement in *Canaan*, in the Tabernacle and Temple; if this Cloud of Glory, I say, which was the very Soul and Center of the *Mosaical* System, be introduced in the Book of *Job*, and a divine Oracle from thence pronounced in Behalf of that righteous Man, then it cannot be said, that there is no Allusion in the Book of *Job* to the Writings of *Moses*; but all must on the other side confess, that the most notable Fact in the whole Book of *Job*, took its Rise from the History of *Moses*. Now I shall transcribe those Passages, which I conceive are to be understood of the *Shekina*, or divine Presence, both according to our modern *English*, and the most antient *Greek* Translation.

50 No Alphabetical Letters before Moses.

PREFACE.

Elihu toward the Conclusion of his long Speech, is surprized with a Peal of Thunder, upon which he thus expresth himself.

C H A P. XXXVII.

(English Translation

altered according to the Greek.)

1 At (a) this also my Heart trembleth, and is moved out of his Place.

1 At (a) this also my Heart is disturbed, and hath howed out of its Place.

2 Hear (b) attentively the Noise of his Voice, and the (c) Sound that goeth out of his Mouth.

2 Harken (b) thou to the Report of the angry Voice of the Lord, and a (c) meditated Speech shall proceed out of his Mouth.

3 He directeth it under the whole Heaven, and his Lightening unto the Ends of the Earth.

3 His Empire is under the whole Heavens, his Lightenings unto the Ends of the Earth.

(a) Thunder and Lightening was previous to the Appearance of the divine Presence on Mount *Sinai*, *Exod. xix. 16.*

(b) The Hebrew is in the plural Number, and the Greek in the singular, and therefore the Admonition was by the LXX understood as directed to *Job* only, whom *Elihu*, on all Occasions, represents as not only very wicked, but as stupid and senseless. He assumes to himself the Part of *Moses*, and therefore declares his own Fear and Trembling at the divine Appearance, and exhorts *Job* to follow his Example, and tells him, that he was placed in God's Stead, *Ch. xxxiii. 6.* and every where displays his own Arrogance. It was thought by the LXX to carry an Implication of Anger with it. See *Pf. iv. 4.*

(c) As the Noise of God's Voice signifies Thunder, so the Sound, or meditated Speech, that was to go out of his Mouth, denotes the articulate divine Voice speaking out of the Cloud, when the Thunder ceased. It is plain that *Elihu*, or he who put this Speech in his Mouth, was no Stranger to the History of God's giving the Law at *Sinai*. For he knew that a Speech from God was to follow the Thunder and Lightening.

Elihu

No Alphabetical Letters before Moses. 31

Elibu proceeds in speaking magnificiently of God, and depressing *Job*, ver. 21. he reprehends him and his Friends, as if they did not see a refulgent Light which shone aloft. PREFACE.

(English Translation

altered according to the Greek.)

21 And now Men see not the bright Light, which is in the Clouds.—

21 The Light that shines afar off in the Skies, is not visible to all.—

22 Fair (d) Weather cometh from the (e) North, with God is terrible Majesty.

22 From the (e) North are (d) Clouds sending forth golden Rays; over these is the great Glory and Majesty.

(d) How *Gold* came to signify *fair Weather*, is a Question sufficient to puzzle the most learned Rabbi. Reasons are indeed given for it; but such as no Man of common Discretion can approve of. Whether *מָגֵן* were read by the LXX in the Original, and since dropt, or whether this Word were supplied by them, it must be confess'd; that no Word could be more apposite. The very next Words imply some particular Presence of the divine Majesty, even in other Translations, as well as that of the LXX. But *golden Clouds coming out of the North* can denote nothing in good Sense, but the *Shekina* removing from *Jerusalem* to *Idumea*, *Job's Country*.

(e) That *Jerusalem* stood North of *Idumea* is a Point in which all Geographers, so far as I can inform my self, are agreed. The divine Glory, or Presence, removed from the Temple at, or before the Time of its being burned by the *Chaldeans*. See *Ezek. xi. 22, 23*. And whither should it now be convey'd, but to the best among the Heathen, to the most pious of the Sons of *Esau*, *Jacob's Brother*? Yet not to make any permanent Abode with them, but to retreat from the holy Land by the same Way by which it came thither. See *Numb. xx*. The LXX read *מָגֵן* for the present *מָגֵן*.

D 2

Touch

52 *No Alphabetical Letters before Moses.*

(English Translation

altered according to the Greek.)

23 Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out, he is excellent in Power, and in Judgment, and in plenty of Justice (f) he will not afflict.

23 Of the Almighty; we cannot find another like to him in Power, who decreeth justly: (f) will he not effectually hear, or answer?

24 Therefore Men do fear him. (g) He respecteth not any that are wise in Heart.

24 Therefore shall Men fear him, (g) even Men that are wise in Heart shall fear him.

The Writer of the Book of *Job* says,

C H A P. XXXVIII.

(English Translation

altered according to the Greek.)

1 Then God answered *Job* out of the Whirlwind.

1 God spake to *Job* in the Storm and Cloud.

There are several Interlocutions between God and *Job* in the following Chapters; but at last *Job* says,

C H A P. XLII.

English Translation

altered according to the Greek.)

7 I have (b) heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee.

7 I have (b) before heard the Ears report of thee; but now mine Eye hath seen thee.

(f) The same Hebrew Word signifies both to afflict, and to hear, or answer. Let the Reader judge, which Translators chose the aptest Sense.

(g) The LXX either read not *אֵל* or else turn'd the Words interrogatively, and then varied them into an Affirmative, as was their frequent Practice. They read *אֵלִים* in both Clauses.

(b) *Job* had often heard it thunder, and that in such a Manner, that he thought that God was in the Thunder. But he had never before heard God speaking to him in an articulate intelligible Voice. Observe

Observe that this *Shekina* represented that on *Sinai*, as well as that over the Ark. It consisted not only of a bright Cloud, but of a violent Storm, or Whirlwind, which made the Hearers and Spectators tremble; and above all, we have the Voice of God speaking from the Cloud. But that this Poet might, in some Particular, exceed his Original, he supposes more than one Cloud, *From the North are Clouds sending forth golden Rays*. The Words of *Moses* to the People, *Deut. iv. 32, 33.* are very observable, *viz. Ask now of the Days that are past, which were before thee, since God created Man upon Earth; and ask from one Side of the Heaven even to the other, whether any such great Thing as this is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever People hear the Voice of God, speaking out of the midst of the Fire, as thou hast, and live? If Moses had ever heard this History of Job, he could not have said this.* On the other Side, neither *Job*, nor any of his Companions, do express any such extreme Wonder at God's thus speaking to them, as if it were a Thing perfectly new, and unheard of before. For they were probably Profelytes of the Gate, and so knew the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets.

SERMON I.

PREACH'D at

Canterbury SCHOOL Feast.

NUMB. xi. 29.

—Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets.

I. I Shall first shew the Meaning of this S E R M.
Wish of *Moses*; And, I.

II. The Reasonableness of it.

I. I am to shew you the Meaning of this Wish. And this wholly depends on the Signification of the Word *Prophets*. All will agree, that whatever that Exercise, or Business was, in which the *LXX*, together with *Eldad* and *Medad*, were imployed, was *prophefying*, and that
D 4 there,

SERMON. therefore they who had attained a Readiness in doing of it, are here called *Prophets*. But to be more particular,

I. *Prophets*, in the highest Sense, are such as do themselves receive Revelations immediately from God; in order to deliver them to others. Such was *Moses*, *Samuel*, *David*, and as many as have left us their Predictions, or other inspired Documents in the holy Scriptures. But there is no Reason to believe, that the LXX Elders mentioned in this Chapter, did receive any Revelations immediately from God. During the Pilgrimage of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, God is perpetually said to *speak to Moses*, or to *Moses and Aaron*, never to the LXX, or any of them; nor to any other Person, except *Balaam* only. Nor did God, at any other Time under the *Jewish* OEconomy, grant this Privilege of immediate Revelation to so great a Number as LXX at once. One, or a few Prophets of this first Rank, were sufficient for the Good and Benefit of all Mankind, at any one Time. *Moses* does not complain, that he was not able to bear the Burden of those many Revelations that were made to him, nor by Consequence did he design that others should share with him in this great Privilege. But he represents his Grief-vance

vance in these Words, *I am not able to* SERM.
I.
hear all this People my self alone, ver. 17. 

And it was in this Point that he prayed for Redress. He could not mean, that he was not sufficient to hear and determine their Suits and Controversies in civil Matters. For in this Particular he had, by the Advice of *Jethro*, been relieved some Time before; when a Deputation of inferior Magistrates was made to judge the People at all Seasons, reserving the harder Cases only for his own Cognizance, *Exod. xviii. 26.*

2. There were a Sort of secondary Sect. 2.
Prophets, that is, such as received Oracles, or Revelations from superior Prophets, in order to publish, or notify them to others. We read, *Exod. vii. 1.* *The Lord said to Moses, thou shalt be a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy Prophet.* In the next Verse this is thus explained: *Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron, thy Brother, shall speak unto Pharaoh, or be thy Spokesman,* as it is express'd, *ch. iv. 16.* For though, in some Particulars, *Aaron* was a Prophet in the highest Sense, by receiving Revelations immediately from God himself, together with his Brother *Moses*; yet, for the most Part, he was a Prophet of a lesser Rank, that is, he received the divine Commands and Instructions

S E R M.
I.
fructions from his Brother, and executed, or promulg'd them as such. *Miriam* hath the honourable Title of a Prophetess given to her, because she was able to be Leader, or Principal in the Company of Women, who joined with her in singing the triumphal Song, which *Moses* had compos'd by the divine Spirit, *Exod.* xv. 20, 21. And all such as under superior Prophets exercis'd themselves in singing Psalms or Hymns in Honour to God, are said to prophesy; and thus *Saul*, and his Messengers, were *among the Prophets*, while they were employ'd in this musical Devotion. *Samuel* being appointed over them, and the Spirit of God being upon them, *1 Sam.* xix. 20--24. And they who lived together in Colleges, or Fraternities, and learned to read the Scriptures, and write them with Exactness, under the Direction of inspired Masters, are stiled *Sons of the Prophets*, *2 Kings* ii. 3, 5, 7, 15. iv. 1. ix. 1. Such were those hundred Prophets, who were hid, and fed in two Caves by *Obadia*, and so protected from the Fury of *Jezebel*, *1 Kings* xviii. 13. And Prophets of the highest Rank were, for the most Part, rais'd out of these Fraternities; therefore *Amos* mentions his Case as singular, and somewhat extraordinary, that though he was *neither a Prophet, nor the Son of a Prophet,*

phet, yet God said to him, go prophesy to ^{S E R M.}
 my People Israel, ch. vii. 14, 15. And ^{I.}
 in the Times when Musick was come to
 some Degree of Perfection, we read of
 them that *prophefied on Harps, and*
Psalteries, and Cymbals, under Asaph and
Juduthun, and according to the Order of
King [David,] and that prophefied with
a Harp to give Thanks, and to praise the
Lord, 1 Chron. xxv. 1---3. Whether
 some of these Texts do not imply, that
 the Knowledge of Musick, as well as
 Letters (in these Prophefies) was to be
 ascribed to the Holy Spirit, I shall sub-
 mit to better Judgments.

However I cannot doubt, but that in
 describing these inferior Prophets, I have
 given you a just Character of the Office
 and Employ of these LXX Elders; that
 it was to report to the People such Laws
 as *Moses* received from God, to inge-
 minate upon them the Promises of a
 Land flowing with Milk and Honey,
 and to instruct them in singing such
 Songs and Hymns as he composed for
 their Use. Nay, it is probable, that
 one Part of their Business was to teach
 them to rehearse God's Laws, if not to
 sing * them too. For we know this
 was

* *Aristotle*, Problem xix. 8. lets us know, that the *Greeks*
 called *Tunes Νῆμτοι*, because Laws were sung before the
 Use of Letters; and the *Agathyrsi* kept this Custom still.

Strabo,

SERMON was the Practice of the Nations of
I. old.

It is evident, that there was a great Occasion for a good Number of such Prophets as these. For the People had lately betrayed a very mutinous Disposition of Mind; they had in Effect declared, that they would return back to *Egypt*, unless they might have Flesh to eat, *ver. 4, 5*. God resolved, for once, to indulge their Appetites; but upon *Moses's* Expostulation, takes a proper Method to subdue and cure this seditious Humour for the future; he directs *Moses* to choose out LXX Men (or to speak more precisely LXXII, six for each Tribe) to entertain the Minds of the People with the Knowledge of those many new Laws, which he had lately enacted, and to sooth their Spirits, by frequently reminding them of the good Land whither they were travelling, and often calling upon them to join with Heart and Voice in Hymns of Praise to their Almighty Sovereign. *Moses* thus expresseth his Complaint to God: *Have I conceived all this People, have I begotten them? that thou shouldst say unto me, carry them in thy Bosom, as a nursing Father*

Strabo, pag. 539. tells us, the *Mazacenes* sung the Laws of *Charondas*, and had their *Nomoths*, or Precentor, in singing the Laws.

beareth

beareth his sucking Child, unto the Land ^{SERMON}
which thou swearst unto their Fathers, v. 12. ^{I.}

And God, by assigning him these inferior Prophets for assisting him in the Manner before represented, did as effectually answer this Complaint of *Moses*, as if he had in express Terms said, "Thou hast justly compared this People to Children. For they are rude and ignorant, especially of Religion, peevish and querulous, craving and discontent. Thou must therefore, with the help of these LXX, endeavour, like a tender Parent, by gentle Means to bring them to an Evenness and Composure of Mind, by the soft Methods of Instruction and Persuasion, hushing their Cries, and silencing their Clamours, by giving *them Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, here a little, and there a little*, out of the Laws and Memorials lately committed to thee. And more particularly, thou must make use of these LXX Assistants to win and engage this People to me and their Duty, by frequently mingling Lessons of Musick with their other religious Exercises." And from hence we may, perhaps, see from whom *Orpheus* and *Amphion* learn'd the Art of charming the Spirits of a rough froward People,
into

SERMON. into a more governable Temper, by Virtue of harmonious Sounds.

I.
 Secd. 4. But there is one very obvious Objection against what I have been saying, viz. that if the only Business of these Prophets was to repeat such Laws, Memorials, and Songs as they received from *Moses*, there seems to have been no Occasion for the help of God's Spirit to this Purpose; but now *Moses* expressly says, that *when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied*. By which he clearly ascribes their prophesying to a divine Operation.

And it is true, that if these Elders had before known to read, there had been no Occasion for an extraordinary Assistance from the divine Spirit. But we are to remember, that the whole Body of the *Israelites* were but lately free'd from a long Servitude, in which they had no Leisure, and probably no Toleration to study any liberal Science, or even to learn Letters. *Moses* indeed, by a very singular Providence, had the Education of a Prince, and *was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts vii. 22. and therefore knew Letters, even before he was called to the prophetic Office, if his Instructors themselves knew them. But as for the rest of the *Israelites*, their hard Bondage in Brick and Clay afforded them

them probably neither Time nor Inclination to use Books, if they had any. BERM.
7.
Therefore it was necessary in this Case to raise a Seminary of Men to promulge the divine Oracles by Inspiration.

But to speak my own Opinion, I see no Occasion to believe, that either the *Israelites*, or even the *Egyptians*, had Letters before this Time. The Writings of *Moses* are certainly the most antient of any now extant; and that there ever were any before them does not appear. Nor do I think, that *Moses* invented Letters by the Strength of his own natural Genius; but that he learned this most excellent Art from God, by often viewing the Ten Commandments written on the Tables of Stone in the Mount, and by being at last directed by the Holy Spirit how to read them. Therefore it is said, God took of the Spirit that was upon *Moses*, and gave it to the LXX Elders; and thus that Knowledge of Letters which was before by the Document of the Spirit conferred on *Moses*, was now communicated to the LXX, that so they might read and write them with a uniform Harmony, without any Mistake or Variation. And it is scarce conceivable how this could have been done by Men that were in themselves wholly illiterate, by mere human Assistance and Direction.

And

SERM. And it well deserves our Notice, that
 I. by taking the Word *Prophecy*, in this true
 genuine Sense, that is, for reading exactly,
 & *Scriptis*, what had been first written
 by a superior Prophet, and pronouncing
 it either with a plain or a singing Voice,
 there will be no Occasion to disguise the
 last Words of the 25th Verse; but we
 may translate them, as the *Greeks* do, and
 as the *Hebrew* clearly, and without all
 Doubt signifies, *viz. they prophesied,*
and added not, they read or sung such
 Lessons as *Moses* had assigned them, with-
 out making any Additions of their own.
 And this shews how much they are mi-
 staken, who suppose, that *propheying* in
 this inferior Sense, signifies expounding,
 or explaining Scripture. To *prophecy*,
 and to *make Additions* (how true soever)
 are two Things contrary to each other.

What hath been said may give some
 Light into the Nature of the Evangelical
 Officers called *Prophets*, whom St.
Paul twice places next to the Apostles,
viz. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Many
Wise were not called in the Infancy of
Christianity. Christ Jesus himself, though
 he *knew Letters*, yet *never learn'd them*,
 by the Confession of his Enemies, *John*
vii. 15. and therefore had this Know-
 ledge by Inspiration. The Apostles were of
 themselves *ἀγράμματοι, illiterate Men*, but
 had

Knowledge of Tongues and Letters infused into them by a miraculous Power, and so were made *able Ministers of the New Testament*: For they could either by Letter, or by Word of Mouth, have instructed all People of the World, that were capable of hearing their Voice, or of reading their Writings: They were often called off from the Churches which they had raised before they had fully settled them in a perfect Order of Worship and Discipline, or given them full Information in Things relating to Faith and Salvation: Therefore to supply these Defects, some approved Men were appointed in each Church to instruct the People in all Things necessary: And it was necessary that these Men should, by Inspiration, be instructed in the Knowledge of Letters, as the LXX were in the Time of *Moses*, if they had it not before by Education and the common Methods of Instruction: Or else, that they and their Scholars should have their Memories strengthened and rendered tenacious to a Miracle: For it was their Business to report to the People, and teach them such Memorials relating to Religion, as they from Time to Time received from the Apostles; and they were Prophets under the Apostles, as the other were under *Moses*; they were not to add any

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S E R M. ^{I.} Thing of their own, nor to *be wise above,* or *beyond what was written,* 1 Cor. iv. 6. *written* occasionally by the Apostles, the principal Guides of the several Churches planted by them, for the Information and Regulation of the People; which was highly necessary, while all Churches were yet in a very unfinished State, and while the Gospels were not yet published. And it is farther observable, that private *Christians* of each Sex, were by these Prophets taught to join in singing or chanting the Hymns and Psalms, and in vocally pronouncing some Parts of the publick Prayers in Confort with the whole Congregation; and they that were enabled to do this, whether they were Men or Women, were said to *pray or prophesy,* 1 Cor. xi. 5. And thus was fulfilled that Prediction concerning the Times of the *Messias, your Sons and your Daughters shall prophesy.*

II. I proceed to shew the Reasonableness and Excellency of this Wish, that all the Lord's People were Prophets, that is, that they perfectly understood Letters.

And this shews *Moses* to have been a Man of a generous, publick Spirit. It is just to suppose, that this admirable Person did easily discern of how great Advantage

vantage Letters would be even in the common Concerns of human Life, in stating and ascertaining Accounts and Contracts, in preventing or deciding such Disputes as must frequently happen between Men in Trade or Dealing, while they were forced to trust wholly to their Memories or their Scores. He saw how, by the Art of Writing, all Nations of the World might, by Degrees, be made capable of having their Laws fixed and determinate, not left to the uncertain Reports of those who made the greatest Pretence to the Knowledge of them, nor to the occasional or discretionary Resolutions of Magistrates. As *Moses* was learned in all the Wisdom of the *Egyptians*, such as it was, so he easily foresaw how, by the Use of Letters, all Sciences would be improved; and that, by the same Means, the History and Observations of present Ages might, with some Degree of Exactness, be transmitted to future Generations; and by Consequence might be always in a thriving Condition, if every Age did but make a suitable Addition to the Stock left them by their Fore-fathers. He had, by Experience, been convinced how obscure and doubtful the Records of the *Egyptians* were, while they were kept, not in Letters, but in Hieroglyphicks.

S E R M. In a Word, he justly esteem'd the divine
 1. Art of painting Words, and engraving Thoughts in the certain Alphabetical Method, to be the Foundation of all the most noble, beneficial Improvements that Mankind was capable of making.

2. But especially he had a just Sense of the Usefulness and Necessity of this Art, for the delivering and preserving the most inestimable Treasure in the World, I mean, the Knowledge of divine Truth. He had before his Eyes a sad Proof of the Insufficiency of Tradition to this Purpose; he saw all the Nations of the known World, for want of a more clear and certain Light than this, had lost the very first Principle of Religion, the Belief of one only true God; and that the Country wherein he himself was born and bred, had degenerated into the most senseless and sordid Superstitions and Idolatries; whereas, if they had had true Records of Time, written in Alphabetical Characters, for 900 Years backward, that is, to the Times of *Noah* and the Flood, the Novelty, as well as Folly, of the Worship now in Fashion among the *Egyptians*, could not have been concealed. He found how prone his own People, the *Israelites*, were to this prevailing Error of false Worship. And though God had lately, in a very signal Manner, exerted

exerted his Power and Goodneſs in re-^{S E R M.}
deeming them from the *Egyptian* Bond-^{I.}
age, and recovering them from the dan-
gerous Contagion of Idolatry, which had
then over-ſpread the World; yet he had
Reason to apprehend that the Memory
of the Miracles, which God wrought,
and the Revelations which he made on
this Occaſion would ſoon be dropt, if he
had not been able to commit them to
Writing, and if there were not a Provi-
ſion made for a Succeſſion of Men, who
were qualified to read theſe Records.
Therefore the Sum of his Wiſh was, that
all the People might be ſuch Prophets as
theſe LXX were, that is, exact, intelli-
gent Readers of his Writings.

This may ſeem a very deſpicable At-
tainment to Men of this Age, but it was
a great Excellency at that Time, when
there appears to have been no Letters
but what had been written by God, or
Mofes. To read and write our own
native Language with the greateſt Per-
fection, ſeems a Thing of ſmall Account
at preſent, when the Word *Learning*
carries with it an Idea of two or three
dead Languages, as well as of Hiſtory
and Philoſophy, if not alſo of Mathe-
maticks, Oratory, and Poetry. But I
conceive, it may juſtly be ſaid, that theſe
LXX, who propheſied under *Mofes*, were

SERMON in this Respect more learned than any
 I. other Men in the World, excepting him
 alone.

Nay, I perswade my self, that any judicious Divine would, even now, rather choose the Learning of these LXX, than that of all the most profound *Rabbies* that have lived for 2000 Years past. For they being inspired with the Knowledge of Letters, wanted no other Light to direct them in the Pronunciation of every Syllable, the Form of every Word, the Punctuation of every Sentence, and those other little Circumstances in reading and writing the *Hebrew*, which create such real and great Difficulties to all that in later Ages have laboured in this Province. And the true, certain Meaning of every *Hebrew* Word and Phrase was then easy and obvious to all *Israelites* of good Sense, while that Tongue was in vulgar Use; so that the Gifts of these *reading Prophets* were certainly much to be preferred before all the Learning of the Commentators that have wrote upon the *Pentateuch* from that Time to this. Nay, and by this Means the New Testament too would be better understood. For it is well known, that the *Hellenestic* Language is but a *Hebrew* Way of speaking in *Greek* Words. And one of the greatest Labours of modern Divines is to discover

cover the true Meaning of the antient ^{S E R M.}
Hebrew Phrases and Diction. And in ^{I.}
this Respect, if one of these LXX were
now living, he would be the most able
Critic in the whole World.

In a Word, if *Moses* in this Wish had
no other End in his View, but only that
by these Prophefings God's Laws might
be more universally known, valued, and
practised, and so more Honour and Glo-
ry be done to him, it was a Wish wor-
thy of a good and great Man, and to
which all true *Israelites* would readily
say, *Amen*.

Some, perhaps, may think, that if
Moses had gained his Wish, it would
have tended to the lessening himself
and the LXX, who prophefied under
him. For whatever is common, is there-
fore despised and undervalued; while
what is rare, and peculiar to a few, must
of Consequence render those few more
dear and venerable to others. Now the
stronger this Objection is, the greater
Idea it gives us of this wonderful Man.
He might have kept the Knowledge of
Letters as a Secret to himself, and his
own Family, the sacred Tribe. But he
rather chose to have this Knowledge
equally diffused through the whole Na-
tion, than to keep it as a distinguishing
Ornament to those of the holy Function.

SERM. And I take it as certain in Fact, that several of the Lay Tribes were not at all behind that of *Levi* in the Knowledge of Religion, and every Thing else that was valuable.

But I cannot persuade my self, that the Growth of Knowledge in the truly religious Laity, can be any Diminution of Honour to the Clergy. The People of the Primitive Church did very highly esteem their Clergy, yet not for want of Knowledge, for they understood the original Records of their Religion as well, at least, as any Body of Laymen in the following Ages. The People of the *Greek* Churches understood that Language in which the New Testament was written as their Mother-Tongue, Nay, *Greek* was then known by many in *Rome* it self, and in other Parts of the *Latin* Church, If a great Number of the *Latin* Laity knew not *Greek*, no more did many of the most famous *Latin* Bishops. And not more than two or three of the whole Clergy of the *Christian* Church understood *Hebrew*, during the four first Centuries. Therefore it was not the Superiority of the Pastors of the antient Church, in Point of Learning, that procured them so great an Esteem among their People. If this were the Case, the Clergy of the present Church

Church might justly expect as respectful a Treatment at least, as the Primitive Bishops and Priests received from the Laity. For it may be justly said, that more Learning is now necessary to qualify a Man for *Deacon's Orders*, than was of old necessary for a *Bishoprick*. And if Priest-haters have no better Proof of their knowing better than the Clergy, than the hard Names and ill Usage, which they are perpetually pouring upon them, the Vanity of their arguing will easily appear, since there are, and ever were, Men equal and superior to them in all commendable Knowledge, who yet retain as great a Regard and Deference to those of the sacred Function, as they can in Reason desire. They who love and esteem the Clergy upon a true lasting Principle, do it for their *WORK's sake*, as the Apostle speaks, or because *they rightly offer the Gifts*, as St. *Clement* expresseth it. The Clergy can never have Occasion to complain for want of Esteem from those who know the Value of their Ministrations.

And if *Moses* thought that the prophesying of the whole Body of the People could not eclipse the Honour of his Person, nor of his Tribe, or Family, much less could he think that *Eldad* and *Medad* detracted from them by exercising
their

SERM.

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their Gifts in the Camp, apart from the LXX. *Joshua*, no doubt, was prompted with an officious Zeal to bring an Information against them, and to desire that they might be silenced by Authority; he *envied*, or was *greatly concerned for Moses's sake*. If it had appeared that these two Prophets acted in Defiance or Opposition to him, I see no Reason to question but that *Moses* had made Examples of them. But since they prophesied by the same Spirit that the LXX did, and continued their Subjection to their superior Prophet *Moses*; since it is not conceivable how they could have any written Memorial, to read or sing, but what *Moses* had first delivered and assigned to them, as their first Lesson; therefore instead of forbidding, he rather approves and countenances them. For so long as there was a Unity of Spirit, the Difference of Place was little considered by *Moses*. It is not improbable that they were absent from the Tabernacle of the Congregation out of a reverent Regard to that sacred Place, and in Obedience to some of the Laws newly given, whereby they that were under any bodily Uncleaness, were forbid to approach the Sanctuary; or however, that their Separation from the rest was casual, not affected, or designed.

From



From the whole we may observe,
 1. If to read and write our Mother-Tongue were sufficient to entitle us to the Character of Prophets, then *Moses's* Wish was never more nearly accomplished in any Age or Country than our own. It is true, none do, or ever did among us, esteem this a Gift of the Spirit. Yet I cannot for my Life see any just Cause, why to speak *English* fluently should pass among many People for a Gift of the Spirit, while yet to write, or read it in Book, is thought to be a very low and mean Attainment. Many Men do naturally speak their own vulgar Language with great Fluency, and a very agreeable Accent, who yet are ignorant of Letters, or know them very imperfectly. Strange! that Men of common Sense should be so partial in their Judgments, as to think a mere natural Faculty to be a Gift of the Spirit, and at the same Time to despise reading Priests; whereas, in Truth, speaking without Book is no Proof that a Man is taught either by God or Man. Reading is a certain Evidence that he who does it hath some Learning, that he hath been taught by Man at least.

2. I take it for certain, that no Man can now deserve the Title of a *Prophet*, how exquisitely soever he understands,
 reads,

S E R M. reads, or writes, our own Mother-Tongue,
 I. or any other. This cannot be till some
 new Revelations are to be published, and
 Men; without any human Teaching or
 ordinary Means, are qualified to be Pub-
 lishers of them. In the mean Time *Pro-*
phesying fails. Nay, the Tongues them-
 selves, on which principally this Gift was
 exercised, are dead and gone, I mean, the
Hebrew and *Greek* wholly cease in all
 Nations from being in vulgar Use. The
Hebrew hath not been the common
 Tongue of the *Jews* for above two
 thousand Years past, nor pure *Greek*
 the Tongue of the *Grecians* for near
 one thousand Years, excepting that di-
 vine Service is performed in it in some
 Churches. But the sacred Writings, for
 the sake of which this Prophetic Gift was
 first given by God to Men, do still sub-
 sist. We have still these divine Oracles
 written in their original Languages.
 And though these Languages are dead
 as to common Use, yet the Texts and
 Records of our Religion still live, and
 breath, and speak divine Truth to the
 Minds of good Men that apply them-
 selves to the Study of them. And here
 we may observe and adore the wonder-
 ful Providence of God, that through so
 many dark Ages hath preserved and con-
 veyed to us these sacred Writings, and
 caused

caused them to be more industriously ^{S E R M.} transcribed, interpreted, consider'd, explain'd, than any Books in the World beside these ever were. ^{I.} 

3. From hence we may see the absolute Necessity of human Learning for the Knowledge and Support of Religion. For since the revealed Will of God cannot be known but from the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are written in Tongues which are taught at present neither by Nature, nor by the Spirit; there is no Way left to come to a just Knowledge of them but by human Care and Labour, with the Assistance of those who have formerly employed their Studies to this Purpose. The very best Translations may lead Men into very many and great Mistakes, if they are not able to compare them with the original. And the Variation of Languages will, in some hundred Years Time, render the present Translations unintelligible to the People, and make it necessary to provide new ones. When God first published the *Christian* Religion, he saw it necessary, by a miraculous Gift, to raise up a competent Number of Linguists. Some among these were endued with the Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Tongue, that so they might have a clear Understanding of the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets: Others were by the

SERMON I.  the Spirit taught, what they did not know before, to read such Memorials to the People as were given them by the Apostles. But Miracles are now ceased; and it will be impossible to preserve the Gospel in any tolerable Degree of Purity, except we endeavour to supply the want of these extraordinary Gifts by the common Methods of Industry and Instruction. And farther, the Knowledge of ancient, human History is necessary to give us Light in many abstruse Parts of the holy Scripture.

4. All that have Learning, and know how to value it, ought to remember from whence they had it. And I have shewed you that Letters and Religion came from one Fountain Head. If it could be proved that *Moses* learned the Use of Letters among the *Egyptians*, yet the Publication of this noble Invention must be owned to be the Work of *Moses*, or rather of God himself. In these Elders, who prophesied under *Moses*; we have the first Institution of Schools and Masters of Letters; a School consisting of a whole Nation with LXXII Teachers (six for each Tribe) deputed and qualified for this Office by the Sovereign of the Universe, the Father of Lights.

5. If the Propagation of Letters came from God, and was by him first intended for

for the Service of Religion, then in com-^{S E R M.}
 mon Juſtice this moſt noble Art ought^{I.}
 principally to be applied to this moſt ex-
 cellent End; to uſe it to contrary Pur-
 poſes is barbarous and unnatural, and
 the very Attempt to confound Religion,
 by Dint of Learning, is horrid and exe-
 crable. The *Greeks* and *Latins* were in
 this Reſpect guilty of a groſs Abufe of
 Letters (though they imploy'd them to
 the Advancement of Oratory and Poetry
 with greater Succeſs than any other Na-
 tion ever did) I mean, that they endea-
 voured, by their Learning, to ſupport
 Polytheiſm and Idolatry, and ſome of
 them Atheiſm, and Contempt of all Re-
 ligion. But theſe are more excuſable
 than thoſe who in *Chriſtian* Countries
 have, by the ſame Means, promoted the
 Cauſe laſt mentioned. The former were
 utterly Strangers to the true God and all
 Revelation; they knew little or nothing
 of the *Jews* and their Religion; they
 could not be ſenſible that the *Phenicia-
 ans*, who taught Letters to the *Greeks*,
 firſt borrowed them from the *Jews*;
 and that therefore the *Athenians* them-
 ſelves owed the Elements of that Learn-
 ing which they had, and which they
 ſo highly valued, to the *unknown* God.
 But they, who among us have turned
 their Pens againſt *Chriſtianity*, might
 know,

SERMON know; if they pleased, that all the Art
 I  tillery, which they imploy against *Christianity*; they received from the Professors of it; and that the Priests of that Religion; against whom they chiefly level their Fire and Fury, are they to whom most Men owe their Instruction in good Letters; as well as in the Doctrine of the Gospel. When these Men treat those of our Order with the utmost Scorn and Indignity, they act as if they thought it just that the Fate of *Joannes Erigena Scotus* should always attend the Promoters of Learning in this Nation. For that great Man was stab'd to Death with the Writing-styls or Iron Pens of his own Scholars, when he came hither upon the Invitation of King *Alfred*, to instruct Men in Divinity and the liberal Sciences.

6. Since Learning is a Support to Religion, it greatly concerns all that have a true Regard to Religion, to use their best Endeavours for the Maintainance and Encouragement of Learning. For without this all Religion must soon dwindle into little Sects and Superstitions. We may from the Writings of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Athenagoras*, *Tertullian*, and other of the most antient Fathers, see how, even human Learning was valued in those Ages, and how successfully it was

was used in Defence of the Gospel. We SERM.
I.
may know how highly the Primitive *Christians* esteemed it, if we consider how heavily they resented the Proceedings of *Julian* the Emperor, when he forbid *Christians* to be Teachers in the Schools of Rhetoric, and thereby deprived the Church of the Advantage of secular Learning, unless *Christians* would send their Children to be taught by *Heathen* Masters. Our blessed Saviour chose to make his Appearance on Earth, in a Time of the greatest Light and Learning that had ever yet shone forth from the Beginning of the World; not only that he might have an Opportunity of challenging the most inquisitive and brightest Heads to discover any Flaw in *Christianity*, or in the Author of it; but to give Countenance to an Age of good Letters and useful Sciences.

But to come closer still to the Occasion of our present Assembly, our Saviour chose a Time to appear on Earth, the most seasonable that could be for the Inhabitants of GREAT BRITAIN: In the Age before he was born, both JUDEA and BRITAIN were in some Measure subdued by the *Romans*, or however, a Communication opened with *Rome* to both these Countries; and by these Means some Dawns of Knowledge and

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good Sense were shed upon the BRITONS, who were before a savage and barbarous People, and little known to the rest of the World. As the *Romans* by Degrees completed the Conquest of them; so by the same Degrees their Commerce with other Parts of the World was daily growing, especially here in KENT, which was earlier cultivated by the *Romans* than any other Part of the Island. Thus by becoming a Province to the *Roman Empire*, against their Wills, the *Britons* shared with the rest of Mankind in the two greatest Blessings in the World, *viz.* TRUE RELIGION and GOOD LETTERS. And that they were not altogether wanting to preserve and make use of both, the Writings of *Fastidius* and *Fauftus* are sufficient Evidence. Nay, in one single Man, *Pelagius*, we have a clear (though unhappy) Proof, that *Britain*, under the *Roman Empire*, wanted no Means that the *Western World* afforded, whereby to raise a Man to the highest Pitch of Knowledge in Religion, as well as Letters. He dress'd up his Heresy with so much Art, that it was not easy for the most learned Men of those Times to discover his Errors, or to bring him to Conviction; and they who, with the greatest Reputation, wrote against him, have not avoided the Imputation of running into
a con-

a contrary Extreame. His Education and Acumen he owed to this his native Country, his Heresy to a foreign Infection and Roman Correspondents. *Bede*, the first English Historian, confesseth, that the British Churches had Schools of Learning, and names two famous Men, *Iltutus* and *Dubricius*, who presided over them. He tells us of the Monks of *Banchor*, who had many well learned Men among them, even at the Time of *Augustin's* coming hither to convert the English. It is evident that Religion and Learning went Hand in Hand, and mutually supported each other in the first Centuries of *Christianity*. May they ever do so, and may the Enemies of the Church see and feel it!

What the State of Learning was here at CANTERBURY in particular, during our Subjection to the Roman Empire, we cannot say upon any Information left us in History. But this we know, that the Parts of KENT were more frequented by Romans, and all Foreigners, than those of any other Part of the Nation; that the Inhabitants of this Promontory were thought more civilized, and therefore more capable of Learning than the rest; that our Situation gave us the Opportunity of receiving Intelligence from Italy, and other Countries which most excell'd

S E R M O N. in Arts and Sciences, more early and readily than they could be conveyed to the remoter Parts of the Island. And that this CITY, being the Center of the *Roman* Settlements hereabouts, must have enjoyed a good Share of all the Learning which was transported hither from the Southern Countries.

Whatever Learning *Augustin* brought with him, CANTERBURY was the Repository of it, and was in that Age the METROPOLIS of Learning, as well as of Religion. *Felix*, the *Burgundian* Bishop, when he was imploy'd by *Sigebert*, King of the *East-Angles*, to settle a School in his Dominions, model'd his Seminary according to the Pattern of that at CANTERBURY. And if CAMBRIDGE was the Seat of King *Sigebert's* Seminary, as some learned Men have supposed, then the School of this City may be justly esteemed the Mother of that NOW ILLUSTRIOUS UNIVERSITY.

THEODORE, who was as great a Man as any in the 7th Century of *Christianity*, whose Learning and Magnanimity of Spirit qualified him for the highest Dignity in any Church of any Age; who was born and bred a *Greek*, and had lived long enough in *Italy* to make himself Master of every Thing that was valuable there; when from thence he removed
to

to this City, and became Arch-Bishop of it, brought with him a Collection of Books in the *Greek*, as well as *Latin* Tongue, and of Humanity as well as Divinity; and, with the Help of his Abbot *Adrian*, taught both these Tongues to many of the *English*. *Bede* tells us, some of them, who were yet alive when he wrote his History, were as expert in these two learned Languages, as in their own Mother-Tongue. But (see the Vicissitude of Learning and Ignorance, as well as of all sublunary Things) within two hundred Years, continual Wars and Invasions had brought Knowledge to so low an Ebb, that the Clergy did not understand their own *Latin* Prayers, till the great King *Alfred* provided a Cure for this shameful Evil, by not only calling over the Help of learned Men from Abroad, and planting a Seminary at *Oxford*, as is commonly said, but by performing the Office of a Master of the *Latin* Letters in his own Palace, and by giving the good Example in translating *Latin* Books into *English* for the Benefit of his own Prelates.

While CANTERBURY was the Seat of a King and an Arch-Bishop, it could not want Encouragement for such Learnings as could in those Times be had.

F 3

But

S E R M.
I.
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S E R M. But since the KINGDOM of KENT hath
 I.
 been happily swallowed up in the MONARCHY of all ENGLAND, and our Arch-Bishops have not found it convenient to make this See the Place of their Residence, it could not in the Nature of Things be expected that we should *excell.* It is sufficient, that we have never wanted a School; and that this hath not been the least considerable of all others; and that if we have wanted learned Men of our own raising, we have had that Defect abundantly supplied from other Parts of the Kingdom, and from other Nations abroad.

The present School is indeed of Royal Foundation, but in its Endowments far inferior to some that have been erected by Subjects. And, I believe, few City Schools in *England* have fewer Emoluments annexed to them in each of the Universities; yet under all these Discouragements it produced in the last Century two miter'd Heads; for I am well assured, that

The memorable THOMAS WHITE, afterwards Bishop of PETERBOROUGH, was a Scholar here. And I need not tell you, that he was one of those seven Prelates that made so notable a Stand against Arbitrary Power, in the Year 1688. and yet afterwards, by his Conduct made it appear, that his Love
 to

to *English* Liberty had not at all tainted ^{S E R M.} the Affection which he bore to his own ^{I.} natural Lord and Sovereign.

The other, PETER GUNNING (much elder of the two) was a Man of wonderful Industry, profound Learning, and eminent Virtue, by which he merited the Mastership of St. JOHN'S College, and the Chair of the Regius Professor of Divinity, in CAMBRIDGE, and was afterwards successively Bishop of CHICHESTER and ELY. Few Schools can boast of a more able, pious, primitive Bishop in many hundred Years together.

I cannot but mention another, who, for his Age, might have been, if he actually was not, School-Fellow to the Bishop last mentioned, I mean, WILLIAM SOMNER, the greatest *English* Antiquary that ever was, excepting only the immortal HICKS, who yet owns the former as * *his Father in the Saxon Tongue*. He the rather deserves this honorary Commemoration, because he wholly ow'd his Learning to this School, and to the Excellency of his own Genius. He never proceeded to either of the Universities, nor did he ever, while alive, receive any Reward or Emolument in any Measure equal to his Merits.

* De nobis, de Patriâ, de venerandâ Antiquitate optimè meritis Literarum Saxonicarum Pater. Dissert. Epistol. pag. 149.

S E R M.

I.

The most learned JOHN SPENCER claims a Right to our Commemoration upon this Occasion, as one of the chief Ornaments of this School, as he afterwards was of the University of CAMBRIDGE, where he finished his Education, and more particularly of *Corpus Christi* College, of which he was, for many Years, a very prudent Governour. None that know his Writings will envy the Honour now done him; for he must be allowed to have deserved well of the learned World, even by those whose Zeal for Religion is most moderate. They of this School do in common Gratitude owe him an honorary Remembrance for the Addition which he made to their Scholarships in his own College.

Few Schools, how great soever, can shew four greater Examples of Learning and Virtue within the Compass of one Century. However, these are sufficient to provoke the Emulation of rising Posterity, which I take to be one principal End of our present Assembly.

But the chief End of all, is to pay our Acknowledgements to the divine Providence, for causing us to be born in a Country of sound Religion and good Letters, and for giving us the Advantage

Advantage of a liberal, *Christian* Edu-^{S E R M}
cation. Therefore, ^{I.}

To the Father of Spirits, from whom descends every good and perfect Gift; to the Son and Word of God, who hath disclosed to us all the heavenly Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and who enlightens every Man that comes into the World; to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, who opens and quickens the Understandings of Men, and gives them a Readiness to every good Word and Work, be ascribed all Honour, Glory, Power, for evermore. *Amen,*



S E R

96 1901 1902 1903

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1944 1945 1946 1947

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1952 1953 1954 1955

SERMON II.

PREACH'D at a

VISITATION

HELD AT

Ashford in Kent.

Luke xxii. 29, 30.

And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as the Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, and sit on twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.

IT was the common Doctrine of the ^{SER M.} antient Fathers*, and may clearly be ^{II.} proved from Scripture, that it was *God the Son*, who did before his Incarnation, frequently assume an human Shape, and

* See Bishop Bull's Def. Fid. Nicen,

appeared

S E R M. appeared to the Patriarchs, *Noah* and
 II. *Abraham*, to *Moses* in the Bush, that
 gave the Law at Mount *Sinai*, whom
 therefore the Children of *Israel* tempted,
 1 Cor. x. 9. whose Glory *Isaias* saw in the Temple,
 Jo. xii. 41. whom the Prophet called *King*, and Lord
 of Hosts, and who was promised to the
 People of *Jews*, by the Prophet *Zecha-*
 ix. 9. *riah*, in those Words, *Behold the King*
cometh: So that it is evident, that he
 had a Kingdom upon Earth many Ages
 before his Nativity, even the *Jewish* Peo-
 ple, to whom he gave Laws, and whom
 he governed always in religious Matters,
 by High Priest, Priests, and Levites, some-
 times with, sometimes without a King,
 or other civil, or temporal Governor.

And as our Saviour was always King
 of the *Jews*, so from his Resurrection
 forward, his Kingdom was enlarged, and
 the Apostles had a Power of Discipling,
 and Baptizing *all Nations*, and as many
 as would believe in him, whether they
 were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, were to be ad-
 mitted into his Church: And this
 Church is called his Kingdom, as where
 it is said, that at the Day of Judgment,
 Matt. xiii. the Angels shall gather out of his King-
 47. 48. 49. *dom all things that offend*; and at other
 Places the *Kingdom of Heaven*, as where
 it is said, *the Kingdom of Heaven is like*
unto a Net, which gather'd of every kind;

So

So that nothing is more apparent, than ^{S E R M.} that *Christ* had before his Incarnation, a ^{II.} Kingdom here on Earth, and continues to have one to this Day, tho' it is not a *worldly Kingdom*, for he claimed no ^{Jo. xviii.} civil Rights, no Power that was pre-^{36.} judicial to *Cesar's*, nor did he set up, or secure his Government by Force, or Guards, or outward Violence, as temporal Monarchs use to do.

He was indeed the civil, or political Prince of the *Jewish People*, that is, he took them into his Protection, gave them temporal judicial Laws, and decided even common Pleas amongst them. Some late Writers would have it, that he was preferred to this Monarchy, by the Votes of the People of *Israel*, and held it by Virtue of the *Original Contract at Mount Horeb* *. For to be true to their Hypothesis, they will not allow that even God himself could acquire a civil Power over the People, but by their Votes and Election; and what can be meant by all this, but that they would have it at the Discretion of the People, whether Christ, or God himself, should have Dominion over them. For † *all Power, say they, is but a Trust*, and as such may be taken away: So that they treat the Son of

* *Defence R. G. C. p. 25.* † *R. G. C. p. 352.*

God,

SER. M. God, or God himself, in the same Manner that they do Princes, and Priests. It may presumed that the next Step they will take, (if they han't done it already) is to put it in the Power of the People to divest Christ of his spiritual Monarchy, and make Way for such a Message as they in the Parable sent after him. *We will not have this Man to reign over us.*

Luk. xix.
14.

But our Comfort is, that the Lord is King, be the People never so impatient. And how incredible is it, that our Saviour should be so exact as he was in the Levitical Law, in separating an Order of Men for his Service, and the governing of the People in Things relating to Religion; but should leave his new People, the Christian Church, to shift for themselves, without any certain Officers to direct, and regulate their Worship and Discipline: And its the more improbable still, if it be considered, that it was prophesied of Christ Jesus, that upon his coming in the Flesh, he should take of the Gentiles, and make Priests, and Levites: Nor does it appear how this great Prophecy could be fulfilled, if, as some would have it, our Saviour's Intention was wholly to take away the Priesthood: 'Tis true he came

II. lvi. 21.

Matt. iii. 3. into the World to purify the Sons of Levi; and instead of sacrificing Beasts to teach them

them to offer unto the Lord a Sacrifice in ^{S E R M.} Righteousness: But there is a great Difference between purifying, or reforming, and wholly destroying; though some Men act and write, as if they thought them the same Thing. II.

And to put the Matter beyond all Doubt, he appointed two several Orders of Officers in his Kingdom, the Twelve, and the Seventy, to which the Apostle, by the Direction of his Spirit, added a third, that of Deacons. And that it might appear to which of these he intended the chief Share of ruling his Church, he declares to the Apostles, in the Words of my Text, that to them *he appointed* the Management of his Kingdom, that they should *eat at his Table*, as Peers and Grandees did in many antient Governments, with their Sovereign, and *sit on Thrones judging the 12 Tribes of Israel*, that is, the Christian Church, the true Israel of God.

The Apostles themselves were under a Mistake concerning the Nature of his Kingdom, they thought it was to be a glorious earthly Monarchy, and therefore, when they heard him speaking of his being to be betray'd, and put to Death, there was a Strife amongst them *which should be the greatest*, ver. 24. Our Saviour lets them know, that none that

SERM. that were of such an ambitious Temper
II. were fit to administer the Affairs of his Government, that they ought to be of an humble, Infant-like Disposition of Mind; in order to qualify themselves for any Share in presiding over his Church. He indeed expressly owns, that there was to be a great, a chief, or Prelate (as the Word *ἡγούμενος* properly signifies) in his Kingdom; he never intended a Parity either amongst the Ministers or People, and that they might know whom he intended to be *Commanders in chief*, To you, says he, *I have appointed the Kingdom*, &c. From hence I observe,

I. That the Apostles were intended by Christ to be the chief standing Governors of his Church.

II. That this Authority was not to die with them, but to be transmitted to others successively to the World's End.

I. The first is, in some Measure, already proved, but it will still be more clear, if it be considered that our Saviour expressly declared, that he gave to St. *Matt. xvi. Peter the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; the least that can be understood by those

those Words is, that he had thereby a ^{S E R M.}
 Power both to admit People into his ^{II.}
 Church, and a Power to shut; or cast
 them out. He adds, *Whatsoever thou*
shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Hea-
ven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on
Earth, &c. and he actually gives the
 same Commission to all the Apostles in
 other Words, *Whose Sins ye do remit,* ^{Jo. xx. 22;}
 &c. As to *loose Sin* signifies forgiving it;
 so, by Consequence, to *bind* it; signifies an
 Authoritative pronouncing those that are
 guilty to be obnoxious to the Punish-
 ment of their Sins: They were to *loose*;
 or *remit*, by preaching Repentance; and
 assuring Men of Pardon in God's Name;
 on that Condition, and they sealed this
 Pardon to them by Baptism, and by con-
 tinuing them in the Communion of
 Saints: They *bound* those who were deaf
 to their preaching; and would not sub-
 mit to the Gospel, by pronouncing them
 unworthy, or by passing Censure on such
 as had been baptized, but fell into scan-
 dalous Sins. They did not only preach;
 and baptise those who believed, but *they* ^{Acts xiii.}
shook off the Dust of their Feet against ^{si.}
 those who were obstinate; *as a Testimony*
against them; and to let them know, that
 it would be more *tolerable* for Tyre and
 Sidon *at the Day of Judgment*, than for
 those who slighted their Doctrine; and

S E R M. II. to shew that their preaching was not like Advice given from any common Hand, which 'twas at their own Discretion to make use of or not, but that they who heard this Message, and slighted it, must one Day answer it at their own eternal Peril. So St. Paul, as *absent in Body, yet present in Spirit*, decreed an Excommunication against the incestuous Christian at Corinth, and ordered him to *be taken away from among them*, 1 Cor. v. 2. The Sentence indeed was to be executed by the People met in a Body; because, as learned Men have observed, there was, as yet, no settled Ministers in that Church; but the Offices of Religion were performed by Men that had miraculous spiritual Gifts, tho' they had not been ordained; but the Sentence was to be pass'd *in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit*, or according to the Mind or Judgment of St. Paul, ver. 4. nor could they take it off again without his Approbation, therefore he says, *if I have forgiven, or absolved, any one for your sakes, or at your Request, forgave I it in the Person of Christ*, or as the Representative of our great Master; so that 'tis very evident, that they not only had this Power, but that they did put it in Execution. And * sure-

* Rights of the Church, pag. 98.

ly

ly they that can pour such Contempt ^{S E R M.} upon this Institution of Christ, as to say ^{II.} it was copy'd from the *'Druids'* by the *Christian* Priests, shew plainly what Regard they pay to the Author of our holy Religion, as well as to us who are the Ministers of it.

But our Adversaries think to answer all this, by saying, that whatever the Censures of Clergymen are, they are not *judicial*, but only *declarative*; and 'tis owned, that all Sentences pass'd by substituted Judges are *declarative*; yet I must say that they are *judicial* too. A Sentence pass'd by one of our Judges on a Criminal is *declarative*; for the Malefactor may be pardoned, or the Dead-warrant may never be signed by the Sovereign, and his Judgment therefore may never take Effect. Yet I suppose, no one will deny that it was *authoritative*. But if they only mean by it, that a Sentence rashly pass'd by an Inferiour may be superseded by the Sovereign, we readily own it; but then we say that this does not at all affect the Commission of the Judge, or his real Authority. For the same Sentence may be both *declarative* and *judicial*, and sure no *Christian* Bishop ever pretended that there lay no Appeal from him to the Tribunal of *Jesus Christ*.

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Further the Power of the Keys, and of *binding* and *loosing*, is justly supposed to imply a Power of commanding and forbidding; so when *Isis* said that she did *bind* and *loose* in her Dominions, the Meaning must be, that she had Power to make and repeal Laws. And 'tis plain that the Apostles exercised this Power, in commanding the *Gentiles* to abstain from *Blood* and *strangled* Things, perfectly indifferent in their own Nature.

1 Cor. xi.

34.

St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that other Things not mentioned in that Epistle, relating to the Administration of the Eucharist, he would *set in Order when he came*; and in 1 *Tim.* v. he gives various Rules of Discipline to that Bishop, for the Use of the Church of *Ephesus*. And he left *Titus* in *Crete*, to *set in Order the Things that were wanting*, by his Episcopal Authority.

II. I now proceed to shew that this Authority was not to die with the Apostles, but to be continued in a regular Succession from them to the World's End. And this will appear,

1. From the Nature of the Thing. It is owned that as no other Society, so neither can the Church subsist without

* Diodor. Sicul. L. 1. pag. 16.

some

some Government, and therefore they who will allow none in the Bishops, or Clergy, or even in the Apostles themselves, yet are forced to set up the Authority of the People instead of it; so that 'tis evident that some Church-Government there must necessarily be, and that the Church cannot subsist without it.

And if some there must be, then all that have either Brains or Forehead must own, that it ought to be the same which *Christ Jesus* left, or that which is least unlike it. Indeed by what Authority, for what Reason, except it be absolute Necessity, any Church, or pretended Church, can set aside a Government constituted by *Christ*, and erect another in its Place, I cannot conceive. Nor do I see what Necessity there is here, or was originally any where else, to lay aside Episcopal Government, where it was once established: I cannot see, I say, unless it were that some body had Occasion for their Lands, and therefore endeavoured to perswade Men, that their Office was needless. As for the common Pretence, that Episcopal Government is not agreeable to free States, 'tis a mere Fiction. For we see them thrive with *Bishops* as well as without them,

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I am, in my own Mind, fully persuaded, that none can any more set aside that Form of Government which Christ established, than that Prayer which he himself made and enjoined us. Some among us, by the same Plenitude of Power by which they have, or would abolish the one, would likewise abrogate the other. But I cannot see by what just Authority any People can set aside a Government founded by our Sovereign *Christ Jesus*; they ought to prove, by some very clear Text of Scripture, that *Christ* intended this Alteration; but instead of proving, they only suppose it.

2. In order to prove this Supposition unreasonable, let it be observed, that, if we may judge of our Saviour's Intention by his Words, the quite contrary is true. For, says he to the Apostles, as *my Father sent me*, even so *send I you*: So that if our Saviour had Authority to delegate others, so had they too; but lest any one should imagine, that at some distant Period of Time this Commission was to cease, he tells them at another Place, *Behold I am with you, &c. to the End of the World*: And if *συνέλεια αἰῶν* do not signify the *End of the World*, I believe 'twill be impossible to fix on any Words that carry that

that Sense. However, it is certain the Commission is in Force till the End for which it was given be served, and that was, that they might *disciple and baptise* all Nations. This great Work is not yet done, therefore the Commission is yet in full Force. S E R M.
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3. The Apostles understood the Words in this Sense, they knew that they were not in their own Persons to continue to the End of the World, therefore they rationally incurr'd, that it was to be extended to their Successors. Upon this Supposition they adopted others into their College, and imparted to them not only their ordinary Authority, but their Title too. *James*, the *Brother of our Lord*, is Gal. i. 19; expressly called an *Apostle*, and yet is by many of the Antients, and some of the most learned Moderns (among which *Salmasius*) denied to be one of the Twelve. *Barnabas* has the Title of an Apostle given him. *Epaphroditus* is expressly called *the Apostle* of the *Philippi-ans*, though, for what Reason I see not, turn'd *Messenger* by our Translators. Many other Instances might be produced, but those of *Timothy* and *Titus* shall suffice at present, who, as is own'd by all, exercised the whole of that spiritual Power in their several Charges which is challenged at present, and has always been

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Heb. xiii.

exercised by Bishops. Nor did they only appoint these Officers, but they charged the People to live in Obedience to them. *Obey them that have the Rule over you.* * They do but abuse their Readers, who would have it turned *Be perswaded by your Governours.* Equals are to be *perswaded* by Equals, but Governours must be *obeyed*. And whereas, 'tis of late pretended, that *πειθομαι* is never otherwise translated in any other Place; this is like all the rest; 'tis so expressly rendred, *Acts v. 36. ὅσοι ἐπείθοσαν αὐτῷ*, as *many obey'd him*.

4. I further add, that this was the Sense of the most antient and primitive Writers of Christianity next after the Apostles, who lived while these Things were fresh in the Minds of all *Christians*. *Clemens*, who was himself appointed Bishop of R—— by the Apostles, whose Writings were of old publicly read in some Churches, gives us a most glorious Testimony to this Truth, when he says, *1 Ep. c. 44. The Apostles having a perfect Fore-knowledge of Things, ordained the aforesaid (Bishops and Ministers, c. 42.) and gave them a Rule of future Succession, that, when they died, other approved Men might supply their Ministration.* And therefore (c. 57.) ye that

* R. of C. pag. 161.

have

have laid the Foundation of this Schism, SERM.
II.
 be ye subject to your Priests. St. Ignatius who was constituted Bishop of Antioch by St. John, and, as some say, by others of the Apostles, and who died within 8 Years after St. John, among a great deal to this Purpose, says, that *Jesus Christ is the Will of the Father, as Bishops also are according to the Will of Christ.* Therefore ye ought to concur in Judgment with the Bishops, which also ye do. For your venerable Presbytery being meet for the Service of God, keep Harmony with your Bishop. Which Words imply a Company of Presbyters living, as we do, under a Bishop. Again he tells the Philadelphians, *I said with a loud Voice, when I was among you, Have Regard to your Bishops, Priests, and Deacons:* And presently after adds, the Spirit said unto me, *Do nothing without your Bishop.* * Irenæus, Bishop of Lions, who lived but 60 Years after the former, says, *'Tis necessary we should obey them, who have their Succession from the Apostles, who with the Succession of the Episcopal Office, have received the Gift of Truth; but to suspect others as Heretics, and Men of a wrong Judgment, who depart from the principal Succession, &c.* I shall have done, when I have given

* L. 4. c. 43.

you

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you a Taste to the same Purpose out of St. Cyprian, one of the most popular Bishops that ever were, Ep. 42. *Unity* (says he) *was handed down from the Lord, by the Apostles, to us who are their Successors*, and both there and in his 69th and 75th Epistles, he speaks of Presidents, or Bishops, who succeeded the Apostles, being ordained to officiate in their stead. Only give me leave, before I part with this Head, to repeat to you the Words of a Synod of Bishops at Carthage, whereof St. Cyprian was one. *The Mind and Meaning of our Lord Jesus Christ is manifest in sending his Apostles, and allowing the Power given him by the Father to them alone, whose Successors we are, governing the Church of God by the same Power.*

From what has been said it appears, that the Authority of the Apostles, and consequently of their Successors, flows wholly from *Christ*, if we may believe the History of this Matter of Fact, as 'tis contained in the most faithful Records of the New Testament, and other early Monuments of *Christianity*. Our Saviour did not consult the People, he called no publick Assembly to chuse his Officers, but did it by his own personal Authority, even before his Church was formed; and yet obliged all People to submit

submit to their Authority. For he de-^{S E R M.}
 clares to them, *He that heareth you,*^{II.}
heareth me, &c. It might as well be
 pretended that *Aaron*, and his Sons, and
 the whole Family of *Levi*, were set up
 by the whole Body of the *Jewish* Nation
 to minister for them in holy Things, as
 that the *Christian* Church did so, and the
 only pretended Reason to the contrary
 is, that, if this be true, there is a fine
 Hypothesis perfectly ruin'd, *viz.* that all
 Power, whether Sacred or Civil, is de-
 rived from the People; but I hope these
 Men must give us leave to believe our
 Bibles, rather than permit ourselves to
 be caught with those slender Webs
 that they have spun out of their en-
 venom'd Minds and Fancies.

'Tis pretended, that *the Law of Na-
 ture gives the People this Right**, *viz.* of
 setting up what Governours they please
 in the Church, as well as State, which
 surely is the most wicked Assertion that
 ever was. This is the first time that
 ever any had the Face to assert, that the
 Law of Nature, or our own Reason, can
 give us any Instructions concerning the
 Government of the Christian Church;
 and it may, with as great Probability,
 be said, that we may, by our natural
 Light, understand all the other Parts of

* R. of C. pag. 156.

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an instituted or revealed Religion, and of the Church or People who profess it, as that it informs us how 'tis to be governed. All sober and rational Men will certainly leave the Creation and Government of the World to the divine Power and Wisdom, and the Government of the Church to him that is the Head and Founder of it, even *Christ Jesus*. But Men of loose Notions, and pretended Philosophers, would shut God out of the World, and his Son out of the Church, only to make Room for their own Schemes and Projects.

The Sum and Substance of all that has, or can be said by these popular Advocates, is no more than what was said, long ago, by *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*: *Ye take too much upon you, ye Sons of Levi, seeing all the Congregation is holy, as well as ye. They cry out, as Josephus says, If there must be a certain Number of Men set apart for the Service of the Tabernacle, why should not the Congregation have the Choice and Approbation of them, &c?* The Answer was the same then as now, *viz.* that their heavenly King, the Head of their Church, had otherwise determined the Point. *And he will cause them to come near to him, even those whom he hath chosen. The Israelites,*

Ex. xix. 6.

as

as well as *Christians*, were a *Kingdom of* ^{S E R M.}
Priests, and might have made the same ^{II.}
Plea, in all Respects, that is now ad-
vanced against the *Christian* Priesthood.
They might have pretended, as well as
our present Adversaries, that it was im-
possible for them to be secure that the
Succession was not, or would not be
broken; and, if no Sacrifices or divine
Services could be acceptably offered, but
by those who were of the Blood of
Aaron, they could never be secure, whe-
ther their Priests were legitimate, and
their Sacrifices regularly offered; and if
any, or all of the Tribe of *Levi* should
hereafter lapse into Idolatry, whether
they or their Posterity could ever be
restored to their Office, and execute it
so as that their Services were valid in
Behalf of the People. Nay, there was
more Room for Scruple in that Suc-
cession, which was by Tradition from
Father to Son, than in ours, which de-
scends only by Commission, in which
there can be no Stain or Corruption
of Blood, as there was, in case an
Aaronical Priest had incurr'd any gross
Irregularity. And if those very Priests,
who had so far profaned their Order,
as to offer Sacrifices in the high Places, ^{2 Kings}
were not (upon their Repentance) whol- ^{xxiii. 8, 9.}
ly deprived, or driven from the Sanc-
tuary,

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tuary, how much more credible is it, that the Posterity of these Priests were admitted to a full Exercise of their holy Function? And how much more reasonable is it in the *Christian* OEconomy, that they who have received Ordination from those who were guilty of the same; or such like Crimes, should, notwithstanding, be allowed to enjoy, the Privilege of duly commission'd Officers in the Church of God.

Num. viii.
12.

Though the *Levitical* Priests did, beyond all Possibility of Doubt, receive their Institution by divine Appointment only; yet 'tis observable, that the Children of *Israel* were to lay their Hands upon them at their Consecration. Now if our blessed Saviour had used the same Form and Method, and stay'd till his Church had been raised before he ordained the Apostles, and caused the new Converts to lay their Hands upon those he had before assigned for the chief Officers of his Church, how would our Adversaries have triumph'd upon this Head? what a decisive Argument would this have been thought in Favour of these new Pretensions? But, as if he had not only foreseen these Disputes, but resolved so to proceed in constituting his Government, as to give no Countenance or Umbrage to any such Claims or Demands,

mands, he did the quite contrary, he ^{SERM.} did himself perform the Solemnity, with- ^{II.} out asking the Consent of any Man, and delegated to them a Power of doing the same. And St. *Clement* observes that they acted accordingly, *by ordain- ing the first Fruits* (that is, those who were the earliest Converts) *the Bishops. and Ministers of them who should here- after believe.* They were so far from asking the Votes of the People, that they ordained Pastors in many Places, before there was a Flock. And if they might have the Authority and Character of Apostles and Bishops, before they had a Church or People, then they may, by Parity of Reason, retain this Character, though the People should withdraw from them, or they, by any Authority of Church or State, be obliged to quit their People; and the 8th Canon of the Council of *Nice* is too famous and notorious to need a Rehearsal. St. *Austin* in one Epistle (261) mentions several Bishops in one Province, who were so deprived, as yet to retain the Name and Honour of Bishops. So that, whatever Conceits may fill the Heads of some, yet our Comfort is, that our Church and its Government was formed near 1700 Years ago; and new Notions cannot alter Matter of Fact, or make it to have

S. E. R. M. have been otherwise than it really was ;
 II. and we trust in him that was the Founder of it, that these new Undertakers shall never be able to build up their own Schemes on her Ruins:

But it may be said, that if Bishops be Successors to the Apostles, why do they not retain their Title, as well as Power ? To which I answer in the known Words of *Theodoret* ; *They formerly called those Apostles, whom now we call Bishops, but in Process of Time they gave the Name of Bishops to them who were of old Time called Apostles.* And sure none can think, that by taking a more humble Title they forfeited any real Privilege; except they will first make Modesty a Crime.

And further, it is freely owned, that Bishops are not Apostles in the most strict Sense of the Word. They are not Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection; they have not the Gift of Miracles, which yet did not wholly cease, till several Ages after that of the Apostles. They do not immediately succeed *Christ*, as the *Twelve* did, they have not every one *the Care of all the Churches* in common, as every one of the *Twelve* had ; but their Care is confined, whether by Apostolical Direction, or by mutual Agreement, I will not determine, within the
 the

the Bounds of their own Dioceses or ^{S E R M.} Provinces. In these Particulars 'tis own'd, ^{II.} that there is a real Difference between our present Bishops, and those who were the first of their Order; these were Pre-rogatives that did not descend to their Heirs; but they succeed them in their ordinary Power of governing the Church, and administering Sacraments, and ordaining others to all holy Offices.

But there have been false Colours laid on the contrary Opinion, which I must take off.

1. 'Tis pretended that *Matthias* was chosen Apostle by the Church or People, and consequently derived his Power from them. But this cannot be; for the Number of Brethren, or Believers, was above 500, before our Saviour's Ascension. There were but 120 present when *Matthias* was chosen. And shall less than one 4th Part chuse a Guide for the whole Society? No*, our Adversaries expressly own, that in *chusing Men to officiate*, every Person has for himself a Negative. The Thing speaks for it self, the 11 Apostles and 70 Disciples made 81 of this Number, the other 39 were either Candidates for the Ministry, or the Relations of our blessed Saviour: So says *Eusebius*, as many of the Apostles and Dis-

* R. C. C. pag. 24.

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H

ciples

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H.

ciples as were then alive, *and the Kins-
dred of our Saviour*, met to chuse *Simeon*,
the Son of *Cleophas*, and Kinsman of
Christ, into the Bishoprick of *Jerusalem*,
then vacant by the Death of *St. James*.

2. Some would draw strange Conclu-
sions from the Liberty given the People
to nominate Deacons; but let it be con-
sidered, that the Care of the Peoples
Souls was not to be committed to them;
the Apostles and 70 were already in-
trusted with that. And after all, the Apo-
stles alone gave Laws, and Orders, how
many should be elected, and what their
Qualifications should be; they first pro-
posed the Election, they at last ordained
them, and convey'd to them whatever
spiritual Power they were to be invested
with.

But we are told * of an *Episcopal Cor-
rection* of *Acts* xiv. 23. that has left out
the Words by Election, or the *Suffrages*
of the People, as if the genuine Signi-
fication of *Χειροτονία* were to ordain those
whom the People had first chosen; but
Hammond, and even *Selden* have effectua-
lly proved, that the Word there sig-
nifies, as we justly render it, *ordain*, they
have proved it, I say, beyond all reason-
able Doubt. So that our Adversaries
might have as reasonably quoted the

* R. C. C. pag. 358, 359.

Error

Error of the Press, *Acts* vi. 3. as the Error of some former Teachers in this other Text. S E R M.
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In after Times 'tis owned, that Bishops were often ordained after the People had first approved their Election; but this was rather a Departure from the first Institution, than any necessary and fundamental Condition required by our Saviour; but in this too our late bold Assertors do greatly exceed the Truth. We have it of late confidently averr'd, that *there is no Instance in the first 3 Centuries, of any one being made a Bishop, except by the Election of the whole Church* *. I will at present satisfy my self in relating some Ordinations of Bishops, made without the Intervention of the People, within this Compass of Time, doubting not that many more may be produced on Occasion. † *Eusebius* expressly tells us, that when *Narcissus*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, retired out of the Way, the neighbouring Bishops appointed another in his stead, whose Name was *Diosc*. And ‖ *Cornelius*, Bishop of *Rome*, in a Letter extant in the History of the said *Eusebius*, speaking of those Bishops who had ordained *Novatus*, says, that of three, at the Intercession of the People, one was received into Lay-Communion,

* R. C. C. pag. 339. † L. 6. c. 9. ‖ L. 6. c. 42.

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but that the Synod, in the Rooms of the other two, had ordained and sent Bishops to succeed them. And the same Author relates, that 'twas a Synod of Bishops that deposed *Paulus Samosatenus* from the Bishoprick of *Antioch*, and ordained *Domnus* in his stead *. Indeed they who deny that any Bishops in the first 3 Centuries were made without the Election of the People, do themselves give us an Instance (for 'tis the Fate of some Men to have ill Memories) I mean, that the Church of *Alexandria*, which (for the first 235 Years) had their Bishops elected by their Presbyters only, if we may believe *Eutychius* and *Jerom.* Though, that they were consecrated by their Presbyters is effectually disproved by the immortal *Pearson*. † And when our Adversaries produce as many, or but one single Instance of a Bishop elected and ordained by the People only, then they shall be allowed to have said something that makes for their Purpose: But let it be observed, that the || Apostolical Canons (which I suppose all Men of Learning will allow to have been composed within the 3 first Centuries) expressly provide, that, *if he who is ordained Bishop, go to the People, but is not accepted by them, he shall, notwithstanding,*

* L. 7. c. 30. † R. C. C. pag. 338: || Can. 35.
standing.

standing, remain Bishop. I hope these Men will not say, the People refused to receive a Bishop chosen by themselves.

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II.

For want of better Evidence in this Case, the Advocates of this Cause quote the Decretals of * *Anastetus*, which have been given up for Forgeries even by those *Papists* who have either Learning or Modesty. Nay, the Writings of *Tertullian* †, after he was turned *Montanist*, are quoted, to prove that there was no Difference between a Layman and Clergyman; yet *Tertullian*, even after he was turned Heretic, was too honest to serve these Mens Purpose. For he ingenuously intimates, that the contrary Opinion prevailed among the Orthodox.

But why should these Men with so much Zeal assert the Peoples Right to chuse a Bishop, when 'tis evident, that both themselves and those, whose Cause they pretend to plead, are so far from desiring a Vote in the Choice of a Bishop, that on the contrary they would, and have, so far as in them lies, voted down the very Order? What they ought to prove is, that the People had the sole Power of electing Presbyters, or Priests, as we abbreviate the Word. Nothing is more evident, than that the Apostles

* R. C. C. pag. 359. † Id. pag. 168.

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had 70 Disciples inferior to themselves, and that all the Bishops or Presidents mentioned by *Clement, Ignatius, Irenaus, or Cyprian* had a Presbytery living in a dutiful Sub-ordination to them, and if they could prove that the People had any settled universal Right from Scripture or primitive Practice, to nominate them, this would deserve our Consideration. But on this Head they have nothing but some loose Harangues and popular Declamations, no Argument, nor any Thing that looks like it.

'Tis own'd that while Bishops had their Revenues from the voluntary Oblations of the People, they were in many Places chosen, or, at least, approved by them. And for the same Reason, after Emperors and other Princes espoused the *Christian* Cause, and endowed Churches, they began to have a great Stroke in this Affair, and by Degrees here in *England*, as well as in some other Countries, the Nomination of them is wholly in the Crown. If any have Reason to complain on this Head, 'tis the Clergy; for in this Church the People never, from the Beginning of *Christianity*, had any Share in the Election or Nomination of a Bishop, much less of a Presbyter, which on the same Account here in *England*, has always been allowed to belong to them

them who founded and endowed the ^{S E R M.} Church, and to their Heirs and Successors, or such as have purchased of them: They have, I say, the Power of electing or nominating a Presbyter, who either has, or is to be ordained by the Bishop, who originally had the chief Power both in chusing and ordaining all that were to serve in this Station.

And whatever Opinion some Men may have of popular Elections, yet I cannot but own, that I wish that our Church may never be the Scene of so much Heat, and Violence, and Sedition as this would necessarily be attended with. 'Twas the tumultuous and factious Practice of the many, which often ended in open Outrage and Bloodshed, that was the Reason of laying aside this Custom, where it had formerly been received, and is altogether as forcible to shew, that it ought not to be admitted in a Church, which has, for so many Ages, subsisted without it. Our Dissenters do exercise this Right, as they are pleased to call it, in electing their Pastors. And I dont think our People have any Reason to envy them in this Particular, but rather to inform themselves how this Privilege is managed by them; what Reputation they have gotten by it, how grave and unanimous they have been in their Proceedings,

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how much Union and Peace among themselves have been promoted by this Means; and, in a Word, what Moderation one Party of them have express'd toward one another upon such Occasions, and our People may consider, that they are Men of like Passion with others, and in the Exercise of the same pretended Privilege, would in all Probability betray the same Infirmities; and then, if they are Men of sound Judgment, or even Masters of common Sense, they would desire to be rid of such a Privilege, if they really had it, and not be fond of a Power that tends not to Edification, but Destruction.

The Puritans and Presbyterians before the late Rebellion, did most vehemently plead for the Rights of the People in this Particular; that the People might have the Choice of their Pastors, was always one chief Article of their Demands. And the poor People thought them in earnest; but when by these and other Outcries against our Constitution, they had destroyed the Church, Root and Branch, as they thought, and had the Power in their own Hands, they never thought fit to instate the People in this Birth-Right of a *Christian*, in this essential Church-Privilege, as they were before willing to have it thought: Nay, several

ral of the Party printed Reasons against the doing it; so that in plain Terms, this is an Opinion necessary only for the pulling down our Church, not for the building their own.

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Indeed upon the best Enquiry I can make, I don't find that the Choice of Ministers is entirely in the People in any foreign Church whatever, either East, or West, Popish, or Reformed, and how it should come to be more necessary here than elsewhere, I cannot conceive, unless for the Reason just before mentioned.

It only remains to be shewed, that the Power which our Princes exercise *in Sacris*, does not any Ways really prejudice the divine Institution and Authority of the Bishops and Clergy.

As the Church of the *Jews* continued many Ages without any settled human Government or Succession of temporal Monarchs, and during this Time all religious Affairs whatever were under the Conduct of the Priests and Levites; so the Church of *Christ* did for 300 Years subsist in the same Manner, as I have already shewed. But when it pleased God in his Providence to permit the Children of *Israel* to be governed, as other Nations, by a Series of successive Monarchs, they had a coercive Power over the Clergy, as well as others, in religious

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religious Matters, and that, as it seems to me, by divine Appointment. For *David* and *Solomon*, who did, in so particular a Manner, exercise this Power, were Men divinely inspired, were Prophets as well as Kings, and so what they did has been, with good Reason, thought to be a Warrant for other Princes. So as soon as the Emperors became Subjects of *Christ*, they were, according to this Pattern, allowed a great Share in the Administration of Church-Government, and tho' the Pope did, for many Ages, eclipse this Power, yet our Kings at, or rather before the *Reformation*, did effectually re-assume it; and one of the * Articles, on which our *Reformation* is built, is, *That godly Kings have all that Prerogative, which God himself gives them in holy Scripture*: Nor do I see that we have any Reason to repent of this Concession. If the State do, in some Particulars, bare hard upon the Spirituality, they must be Men of a very ill Temper indeed, who will from thence draw any Consequences in Prejudice to Right and Truth, from our Submission to those Terms which are not so much the Constitution of the Church, as the Laws of the Land; especially because we readily own, that if the

* Art. 37.

temporal

temporal Laws abridge the Clergy of some Power, which they justly exercised before their Union with the State, they do in others make us ample Amends.

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But 'tis very evident, that whatever these Men pretend, they are Enemies to that Authority which the Queen and Legislature exercise in sacred Matters, as well as to that which is left to the Clergy, in which they seem to act contrary to their own Principles, if I may so call them, for why should they repine at that Authority which the civil Magistrate exercises in the Church, since, if we may believe them, the Magistrate has no Power, but what he receives from the People, and consequently what is done by the supreme civil Power, is the Act of the People themselves.

But we are told, * that *the Sovereign is not to determine what we are to believe or profess, nor has any Right to chuse for his Subjects what is Truth.* But really now I always thought, that we were a *Christian* Nation, and that our Faith was not now to be chosen, and that our Sovereign and Legislature were, in making Laws, and every Thing else, to proceed as *Christians*, and to make it their chief Care to transmit this Faith to our late Posterity. And

* R. C. C. pag. 15, 19.

I can-

S E R M. I cannot but observe, that if in reading
 II. our late *Erastian* Writers you take this certain Principle, this modest *Postulatum* along with you, that the *Christian* Religion is the only true Religion, and that no other is to be expected, and that it is the Duty of civil Governours, as well as spiritual, to promote Peace and Unity in the Church, and to see that Bishops and Priests have their Rights, as well as other Men *; then those Parts of their Hypothesis which seem most strong and plausible, will immediately fly in Pieces.

But wholly to deprive the Magistrate of any Power at all in religious Matters, they likewise assert, that he has no Power in *indifferent Things*. And, if so, then King *David*, and *Solomon*, *Ezra*, and *Josiah* were greatly to blame indeed, and to have all our Princes and Parliaments since the *Reformation*; and yet they pretend to write in Vindication of them, but their true Design seems to have been to set the Legislature against the Clergy, and the People against both; and to this End to say any thing, how irrational and inconsistent soever, that seems to serve a present Purpose. But the secret Reason why these Authors are not willing to allow the civil Power any Authority in indifferent Things seems to me to be this, *viz.* that ac-

* R. C. C. pag. 16.

cording

according to their Notions all instituted ^{S E R M.}
Religion is indifferent. And if the Sovereign therefore have Authority in one ^{II.}
 Point, he cannot be deny'd in all the rest;
 but all their Hypotheses are evidently
 fram'd with this View, this is what they
 would prove, if it were possible, that the
 civil Magistrate has Power to do us, *i. e.*
 the Clergy, Hurt, but none for our Good
 or Advantage.

They are very angry that we claim an
independant Power *. If they would have
 it thought that we don't own our Dependance
 on the State for those temporal Rights we
 enjoy by Common or Statute-Law, they do
 us apparent Wrong. If they mean by this,
 that we deny that we receive our Power of
 administering Sacraments and Jurisdiction
 spiritual from the Crown, not only the Bishops
 and Clergy, but the Sovereign herself, I
 doubt not, as Queen *Elizabeth* did, will
 frankly own this. That we are assisted
 and countenanced in exercising this Power,
 we own, is due to the Queen and Legislature;
 but if (which God forbid) they should
 withdraw their Obedience to the Sceptre
 of *Christ*, and put the Clergy out of their
 Protection, yet could they not divest us
 of our divine Commission. This our
 Primitive Ancestors had before they

* R. C. C. *pag.* 21, 25, 26.

were

§ E R M. were embodied with the State, and this
 II. we should retain, though we lost all our
 civil Rights and Liberties. Sacraments
 would still be as valid as they were be-
 fore, and a judicial Sentence duly pass'd
 would not loose its Effects in the other
 World, though it might in this. Though
 at the same Time 'tis readily owned, that
 they have one Method left of depriving
 and silencing us, against which we have
 no Fence; I mean, the Way that *Doeg*
 used with 8; *Aaronical* Priests together;
 1 Sam. and 'tis but too evident, what some Men
 xxii. 18. would be at.

Before I conclude, I beg one Word,

1. To the Clergy; that they would be
 duly sensible of the Dignity of their Cha-
 racter, and of the Advantage of their exer-
 cising their Function under an Order of
 Men, who have their Powers in a direct
 Succession from the Apostles, and by them
 from the Son of God himself; and that
 they would not permit themselves to be
 perswaded out of their Rights and Pro-
 perties, by false History, and perverted
 Texts of Scripture; nor to be laught or
 jested out of a just Opinion of the Sacred-
 ness of their Order, and the Merits of
 their Cause, by Men who are evidently
 of no Church, no Religion, but what is
 of their own making. I think it one of
 the greatest Misfortunes of the Age we
 live



live in, that a bold Saying, with a little Mixture or Appearance of Wit, goes further with too many, than a sound Argument or a solid Reason; but let us rest satisfy'd with this, that they who are truly serious, and use Religion for that End it was designed, that is, for the saving their own Souls, will easily be sensible, that there is great Difference between Wit and Truth, and that the more venerable any Thing is, the more it is expos'd to the Flouts and Affronts of daring and profane Men; and Men that are truly under the Power of Religion, and are capable of distinguishing between a Jest and an Argument, will value us and our Order the more, when they see that they, who strike at the Foundation of all reveal'd Religion, do in the first Place endeavour to lessen and depress the Clergy; for from hence it appears, that they look on us as the chief Obstacle of all their unchristian Designs: And 'tis to be observed, that they could bear well enough with a Priesthood of meerly human Institution, but 'tis our divine Commission that is so great an Eye-sore to them, which should teach us the more to value and guard that *good Thing*, as *St. Paul* calls it, *1 Tim. vi. 20.*

But

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But they tell us, that by pretending to this Succession, we *unchurch all foreign Protestants*. They prove this by a Saying of Arch-Bishop *Bancroft*, quoted by Halves out of Arch-Bishop *Spotswood's* Church-History. This would be an uncommon Act of Generosity to give up our Privileges, because the enjoying of them may prove inconvenient to others. But there is another and better Way of shewing our Charity to them, and that is, by communicating this Privilege to them; which there is no Reason to doubt, but our Bishops are ready to do, whenever 'tis desir'd of them. In the mean Time we are willing to make all reasonable Allowances for the Prejudice, or Ignorance, or Difficulties which may hinder them from embracing our Form of Government. And sure 'tis possible to be truly moderate without betraying our Constitution; which that we may the better secure, let us,

1. Exert an exemplary and unshaken Loyalty to the best of Queens, and by this Means make it appear, that they who are Enemies to us, and our Order, cannot be truly Friends to her Person or Government. Let us shew a real Zeal and Forwardness to promote those wise and glorious Ends which she proposes to herself in all her Administrations. By
this

this Means we shall demonstrate to the ^{S E R M^s} World, that there is no Inconsistence be- ^{II.} tween civil and sacred Authority, but that they do rather mutually support each other.

2. Let us forget all former Heats or Misunderstandings betwixt ourselves, and join Hand and Heart against the common Adversaries of our Order and Constitution, not with furious or undecent Passions, but with a calm and steady Application to our proper Business. And let us not doubt, but that by these Means, under the Influences and Encouragements we receive from the Government, we may enlarge the Borders of our Church, and, by degrees, reduce those that stray from the Fold. In the Reigns of *Theodosius* and *Valentinian*, mistaken *Christians* had the Liberty of exercising their Religion, as now they have with us. Yet even in that Age our Ancestors of the Clergy got Grounds by their Diligence and Care, they weather'd all the Difficulties they met with, and at last *overcame the World*; and so may we again, if with an united Zeal, we set about so glorious a Work. But nothing can be so fatal to us, and to our Cause, as being divided among our selves and misrepresenting one another. And as we ought to be very tender of each

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others Reputation, so especially of theirs who are the chief spiritual Ministers of *Christ Jesus*, the Bishops. We rightly judge, that whoever raises Clamours against the Clergy, can be no true Friend to Religion; and this is especially true in Relation to those who are our Principals.

2. To the People; I mean, that Majority of them who remain untainted, and continue in the Communion of the Church.

1. They ought to be truly sensible of the Privilege they have in living under a duly authorized Clergy. If we had our Commission from the People (and that's all that the Preachers among our Dissenters can justly pretend to) 'twere reasonable for you to conclude, that our Authority were very disputable, since you cannot but know that you have your selves no Power in these Matters; but this ought to be one great Matter of Comfort to you, that you have the Sacraments administered, and the Covenant sealed to you, by Men who have a Commission from those, who in a constant and uninterrupted Succession received it from *Christ Jesus*. We do not make this a Matter of Pride and Ostentation for our selves (for perhaps one Reason why the Generality of the People

predch'd at Ashford in Kent.

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ple are not so sensible of this Particular, is, that Modesty restrains us from inculcating this Point too frequently upon you) but 'tis a just Vindication of our selves; for how otherwise can we act *in the Name of God*, or pretend to be *the Embassadors of Christ Jesus*? Though the chief End for which *Christ* intended a Succession of his Ministers was, undoubtedly, for the sake of all honest *Christian* People, that they might have all reasonable Security, that they who transact between God, and the Souls of Men, do it not of their own Head, or by a Commission from the Magistrate, or People, but from him who is the Author of our Faith. And bear with me, if I have this once, when our Order and Commission has been thus rudely and barbarously assaulted, told you this important and seasonable Truth.

2. As we have no Reason to doubt, but your Zeal for Truth and *Christianity* is as real and sincere, and burns as warm, as that of those who dissent from us, though it don't blaze so much; so let me advise you to shew it by a constant and devout Attendance upon our holy Ministrations, and above all, that you would with-well doing put to Silence the Ignorance of all Gain-sayers: For this is the
I z most

S E R M. most sure and infallible Means to promote the Interest of our Church.

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3. In order to this, that you would cultivate a good Understanding with your spiritual Guides, for 'tis impossible Religion can ever thrive, while Pastors and People entertain Jealousies, and keep at a distance from one another. In this one Thing I will venture to recommend to you the Example of our Dissenters, who do not in any one Thing do greater Service to their Cause, than in crying up the Virtues and Abilities of their Teachers, and in a close Adherence to them. We desire not an implicit Obedience; we desire nothing of you, but what we can prove to be your Duty from Scripture, and what is your Interest, as well as Glory. Only let us have your good Will and Affections, that we may the better be able to bear the Calumnies and Reproaches of unreasonable Men. *And as many as are of this Mind, Peace be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

S E R.

SERMON III.

O F

The Nature and Office of the HOLY ANGELS.

PSAL. ciii. 20.

*O praise the Lord, ye Angels of his,
ye that excell in Strength, and hear-
ken to the Voice of his Words.*

WHEN the Psalmist here calls up- SERM.
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on the Angels *to praise, or bless*
God, we are not to imagine that he
thought they wanted a Spur to quicken
their Devotion; much less could he sup-
pose, that he himself, or any mortal
Man, was fit to be a Monitor to such
most excellent Creatures. His Meaning
only was to express his Approbation,
and give his Applause to the cheerful
Services,

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Services, which these noble Spirits are always performing to their God; as if he had said, Sing on ye happy Creatures, proceed to glorify your Sovereign Lord, as ye do, and ever did; never desist from so honourable an Employ, so worthy of your selves; continue to chaunt your Hymns and Anthems, till I my self, and all the Spirits of just Men made perfect are fit to join with you in magnifying our great Creator.

I cannot spend my Time here more seasonable on this Day, and at the same Time speak more closely to the Words of my Text, than by discoursing on Angels, the Angels of Light, as St. Paul calls them, 2 Cor. xi. 14. the Angels that kept their first Estate, or Dignity and Habitation, as St. Jude speaks. For these only are meant in my Text, and therefore to these alone I shall confine my following Discourse. I shall consider,

I. The Nature of these heavenly Creatures, so far as we can know it from Scripture, or by the Help of our own Reason.

II. Their several Ranks and Degrees.

III. Their Offices both in Relation to God and to us.

First

First I shall consider their Nature, by observing that, SERM.
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1. They are the prime and most excellent of God's Creatures.

2. The particular Qualities and Advantages in which they excell all other Beings, except God alone.

1. They are certainly the prime of God's Creatures, of all, at least, that we have any Knowledge or Information. It seems very evident, that they were made even before the Earth it self. That this was the Sentiment of the best and most knowing Men of old, appears from *Job xxxviii. 6, 7.* where it is said, *When the Foundations of the Earth were fastened, and the Corner-Stone thereof laid, the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.* By the *Sons of God* all, I think, understand *Angels*. And they who expressed their Joy when the Earth was founded, must have been created before that Time. *Moses*, in the History of the Creation, mentions not the making of Angels, which gives Room to us to suppose, that they had a Beginning more antient than the present World. Some have indeed supposed, that the Angels were created by Virtue of the first *Fiat*, or Command of God, *viz. Let there*

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be Light: Yet it must be acknowledged most rational by this to understand bodily Light, such as makes the Morning, and the natural Day. For if by *Light* you understand good Angels, then by *Darkness* must be meant bad Angels. And, by Consequence, it must be said, that there were wicked Angels before there were any pure ones. For there was *Darkness on the Face of the Deep*, before God said, *Let there be Light*. And it is certain on the contrary, that there could be no evil or dark Spirits, except they at first had been made pure and innocent, and then fallen from their first Estate or Dignity. God must first have made all Spirits good and spotless (for he could make none other but such). And some of them must, by the ill Use of their own Choice and Freedom, have forfeited their Purity and Innocence before they could become Devils. God made nothing but what was very good, therefore no Spirits but what were free from all Blemish and Turpitude. But a great Number of these Spirits did afterwards defile their own Nature, by opposing the Will of their Almighty Creator, and so turn'd themselves into Devils.

We have already seen that the Sons of God, or persevering Angels, expressed their Joy at the Creation of the World,
and



and therefore had a Being before it; and very soon after the Creation we know that there were fallen Angels, and that one of them, in the Form of a Serpent, beguiled our first Parents. It is just and rational to believe, that Angels had a Time of Trial and Probation, as well as Men. And since they were created before the World, it is probable their Time of Trial was pass'd before the Creation, related by *Moses*, began. If the Time of God's making them had come within the Compass of his History, it is scarce to be believed, that he would have omitted so great and excellent Creatures as those of which I am now speaking. He who mentions the making of Plants, and Herbs, and creeping Things, would never have neglected the Creation of the Angels, if they had been the Work of any of the seven Days, of which alone he undertook to give us a Narrative.

The Excellency of these Creatures will appear, if we consider that they are next to God, the most able and powerful Spirits. All Spirits are more excellent than any Thing that is bodily or material. Because nothing that is mere Body, or Matter, can think. It is this that makes our Minds, or Souls, of much greater Value than our Bodies; that these latter Parts of us are heavy sluggish Things without

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without Thought. But our Souls are Spirits, or thinking Creatures; they perceive, apprehend, remember, compare one Thing with another, give Judgment, resolve to do, or forbear any Action. And from contemplating our Souls we may, in some Measure, understand the Nature of Angels. For they too are Spirits, though of a much more excellent Sort. They apprehend more quickly and completely, they remember more fully and exactly; they discern with much greater Sagacity, they judge with greater Certainty, they resolve with greater Wisdom than we can possibly do. And none but God himself exceeds them in these Particulars. And these Particulars are certainly the greatest Excellencies that belong even to God himself, when possess'd in that most perfect Manner that God possesseth them. A full complete Knowledge of all Things, and how to do every Thing, is, undoubtedly, the greatest Perfection of God himself, and all the divine Attributes centre, and may be resolved into this one. Of all Creatures Angels do most resemble God in this Particular. Our Souls know some Things, and how to do some Things. And in this we bear some Likeness of Angels, and even of God himself; but the Likeness is very faint, and vastly distant from that of Angels,

Angels, and infinitely short of that Knowledge which is in God, and which is in Truth the Perfection of his Nature. What is there in Body, or Matter, that can in any Measure be compared to this? an agreeable Disposition of Parts, a beautiful Harmony, a fit useful Figuration, a vigorous, equable Motion, a steady, firm Situation, and the like, these are the only or most observable Excellencies of any Body or Matter; and these too would be of no Use or Worth, if there were no rational or intellectual Beings to take Notice or make use of and enjoy them. This then is sufficient in general to shew the Excellency of the Angelical Nature.

But farther it seems probable, that Angels are not naked Spirits, but are also clothed with Bodies, or Vehicles. Our Saviour seems to teach us this, *Luke* xx. 35, 36. when he tells us, that they who shall obtain the Resurrection, that is, clearly, a happy Resurrection, shall be equal to the Angels. If Angels were naked Spirits, good Men would be more like them, or equal to them, during their State of Separation, while they are absent from the Body, than they shall be after the Body and Soul are again united. It seems therefore that the Resurrection shall make good *Christians* more like to Angels than before, by joining

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joining them to their Bodies. And the Apostle speaks on this Supposition, when he calls beatified Saints, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, that is, Souls exalted to the most honourable State, made equal, or like to Angels, by being united to their raised glorified Bodies. For it cannot be, that the Bodies of Angels can be such gross, heavy, cumbersome ones, as ours are at present, but such heavenly Bodies as raised Saints shall have at the Day of Judgment, and to all Eternity; such Bodies as may be convey'd from the highest Heaven down to the Earth, and back again, raising themselves aloft with a Wing more vigorous and swift than Eagles; such bodies therefore as are not confined, like ours at present, to any one Part of the Universe, but gliding, like Lightning, with an unwearied Force to the most distant Regions of the Universe, without feeling any more Difficulty in ascending, than descending; but, of the two, rather tending upward, like Fire, toward their own heavenly Home, the Place where true Happiness is alone to be found. And just so the changed Bodies of Saints shall be caught up in the Air, to meet the Lord at his coming. And if Angels have had their Time of Probation in a former World, as we now have in this,

of the HOLY ANGELS.

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it seems reasonable that, after the Time of Trial is over, they who have duly acquitted themselves should be treated in all Respects alike; and as we are hereafter to be clothed with heavenly Bodies, so are they now.

The spiritual Substance of Angels can no more be seen by bodily Eyes, or be felt by Hands, than our Souls can be so. Yet Angels have evidently appeared to the Sight of Men. *Zecharia* saw several of them in the Shape and Colour of Horses and Chariots, *ch. vi.* so did *Elisha's* Servant, as well as himself; yet they most commonly rendered themselves visible to others in the Figure of Men, and in this Shape did of old become Guests to *Abraham*, *Lot*, and others, and seemingly eat and drank at their Tables. They appeared like Men, especially when the Design of their Appearance was to deliver some Message, and they chose this Figure as most familiar and agreeable to those that were to receive the Message, and to prevent that Horror and Amazement which they must otherwise have raised in the Minds of them to whom they were sent. And though Angels have Bodies, yet it is not necessary to suppose that they are of any certain determinate Bulk or Dimension, but that they can enlarge, or contract, extend,
or

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 or draw close, at Discretion, as is most for their present Convenience. Nay, it seems probable, that their Bodies are such, as that they can render themselves visible, or invisible at Discretion. It is certain that they have not Flesh and Bones, and that this might be discovered by the Touch, as our Saviour intimates, *Luke xxiv. 39.* yet they can speak and act like Men in all Respects. Some suppose, that they assumed Bodies that are not properly their own, when they appear visible to Men. But I see no Necessity for this, but rather do conceive that they can render their own Bodies solid, or however, what shall seem solid to our Eyes, when Occasion requires them so to do. In all these Particulars the Bodies of Angels exceed ours.

2. I proceed to consider the other Qualities of Angels. And,

(1.) That distinguishing Property of good Angels, which is the Foundation of those that follow, *viz.* their Purity, by which they have always persisted in a due Obedience to their Almighty Lord and Sovereign. For they not only preserved themselves from that Apostasy, in which *Lucifer* and his Accomplices were involved, but have through a vast Series of Years, and even of Ages, continued their

their Loyalty and zealous Fidelity to the S E R M.
Father of Spirits; they still fulfil his Com- III.
mandments, and hearken to the Voice of
his Words, as it is express'd in my Text.
 For this Reason they are frequently cha-
 racterized by the Epithet of *Holy* in the
 sacred Scriptures. At some Places our
 Translators vary this, by giving them
 the Title of *Saints*, though *Holy* and
Saints is the same, if you respect the
 Originals. Therefore whereas, in St.
Jude's Epistle, ver. 14. it is said, the
Lord cometh with ten thousand of his
Saints; the same Truth is thus varied,
Matt. xxv. 31. The Son of Man shall
come with all his holy Angels. I am
 sensible *Eliphaz, in Job iv. 18. says of*
God, His Angels he charged with Folly,
or he observed some Crookedness in them,
as the Greek Translators express it. But
 there is, I conceive, just Reason to be-
 lieve, that the apostate Angels are there
 meant. God is said to be Light, and in
 him is no Darknes at all, that is, he is
 perfect Truth and Sanctity; and St. Paul
 speaks of the Angels of Light, *2 Cor. xi.*
 that is, all who persist in their Obedience
 to God, and never made a Defection
 from him, as the hellish *Luciferian* Party
 did; and he calls them Angels of Light,
 because, next to God, they are the most
 true and holy Beings. And this qualifies
 them

S E R M. them for what is really their chief Adv
 III. vantage and Privilege, which is,



(2.) Their Nearness to God. They dwell with him in the Light, which no Man can approach unto, in the most glorious Part of the Universe, where the Lord God is perpetually refreshing them with his more immediate gracious Presence. When I say they dwell there, my Meaning is, that is their Home, from which they do not choose to absent themselves, unless at the Command of their great Lord. Our Saviour assures us, that *the Angels of those little ones who belong to him, do always behold the Face of his Father in Heaven*, Matt. xviii. 10. they stand near him, as his special Favourites. *Daniel*, in his Vision, ch. vii. 10. *saw thousands of thousands ministering to God, or attending him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him*. Therefore they are often in Scripture called the *Angels of Heaven*, because that is the Place of their Residence, where they do enjoy the divine Vision, and have a close Intuition of his Majesty. And it cannot be doubted, but that, by this Means, their Understandings, which are naturally very bright, are very much improved and enlarged. They having, for many Ages, been possess'd of the greatest Opportunities

nities of increasing their Knowledge, have, beyond all Doubt, made the best Use of them, and do *know God, even as they are known by him.* St. Paul tells us, this shall be the Privilege of the Souls of good Men made perfect, and that they *shall see God Face to Face,* 1 Cor. xiii. 12: And we cannot therefore question but that the Angels do already enjoy this most desirable Sight. For they who being Men are to become Saints in Heaven shall never excell them, but only be equal to, or like them. Therefore when the People of old would express the greatest Degree of Sagacity and Penetration that Man was capable of, they do it by comparing the Person, whose Wisdom they commend, *to an Angel of God,* 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20. xix. 27. It is true, the Divines of the Church of Rome have too far exalted the Knowledge of Angels, by supposing, that in God they do so see all Things, as that they are proper Objects of a Sort of religious Worship. But on the contrary, we are assured by the Apostle Peter, that there are some Things *which the Angels desire to look into,* 1 Pet. i. 12. and which therefore they do not perfectly understand. And whatever Knowledge we attribute to the most intelligent Creatures, we must still speak and judge of their Abilities in this

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and all other Respects, so as to leave Room for an infinite Superiority to him who alone knows all Things, and even the most secret Thoughts.

(3.) Another Quality or Privilege of the Angels, is their Strength, or Force. *They excell in Strength*, says my Text. So Angels Food in *Psal. lxxviii. 26.* is in the *Hebrew*, the Food of the *Mighty*: And we are told, that *Christ* shall come with his *mighty* Angels, *2 Thess. i. 7.* or with the Angels of his Power. This signifies all that inward Vigor and Activity by which they are enabled to transport themselves from Heaven to Earth, and from one of the most distant Parts of the Universe to another, and so to execute the Commands of their great Lord with all possible Expedition and Effect. We are told, God *maketh his Angels Spirits*, or Winds, *his Ministers a flaming Fire*, *Psal. civ. 4.* that is, his Angels, or Ministers, are as swift and expeditious as the Winds, and pervade every Thing with as vehement and irresistible a Force as Fire and Lightning, while they act in Obedience to God's Command. The Locks and Bars of a publick Prison are no sufficient Security against the Strength of an Angel, *Acts v. 18, 19.* even Iron Chains are melted at the Command, or even Approach of one of these powerful Creatures.

Creatures. And the Iron Gates of a City are no sufficient Fortifications against them; for they opened to them without any outward Violence used, as if it had been of their own Accord, *Acts* xii. 6---10. It is indeed said, that *Jacob* had Power over the Angel, and prevailed, *Hos.* xii. 4. but it was clearly by the Angel's own Consent, who dealt with him as a fond Father does with his Child, when, upon a Trial of Strength, he owns the Child to be his Conqueror. And the Angel, to convince *Jacob* that he prevailed against him merely by his Indulgence, and not by his own Strength, lamed his Thigh by a Touch. And all this was done to assure *Jacob*, that his Brother *Esau*, who was now coming against him with a superior Force, yet should not be permitted to commit any Act of Violence upon him, and it was in answer to his Prayer offered to God in this Behalf, *Gen.* xxxii. 11---25. In Truth we can't doubt of his Power, when we consider that this was the Son of God in Form of an Angel. So *Jacob* confesses, *I have seen God Face to Face*, *Gen.* xxxii. 30. But there is another great Instance of the Strength and Vigor of Angels, that they live without Sleep, and are therefore called *Watchers*, or *Wakers*, *Dan.* xiii. 17---23. and are said not to

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cease

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cease Day or Night from their glorious
 Imployment of praising and serving God.
 As they have not Bodies of Flesh and
 Blood, so they need no Meats or Drinks,
 and have nothing in them that is gross
 and sensual, and so want no Recruits or
 Refreshments. Their own Nature and
 Constitution contains in it a very strong
 Spring of Motion and Action, that can
 never be worn out or enfeebled.

(4.) The last Property of these excel-
 lent Creatures which I shall mention, is
 their Unanimity or Concord among them-
 selves. It is certain that all Wars and
 fierce Contentions among Men do arise
 either from some Defect or Pravity in
 the Will, or from some Weakness of Un-
 derstanding of one Side or on the other,
 or both. But now the Wills of Angels
 are thoroughly rectified. They all aim at
 the same End, the Glory of God, and the
 Prevalence of Truth and Right. They
 are all holy Creatures, and no private
 Interest, no separate Views can enter in-
 to their Thoughts. They have no cove-
 tous or ambitious Desires to gratify, and
 therefore all Occasion of Strife is far from
 them. Nor are they liable to any Mis-
 take in judging of Things, Causes, or
 Persons, but all of them see in a full and
 true Light; and this is in Effect to say,
 they see every Thing in the same Light,
 and

and therefore have the same Sentiments ^{S E R M.} in every Particular, without any Possi- ^{III.} bility of Dispute or Variance. And if, as our Saviour observes, *Satan can't be divided against Satan*, and there is a kind of Unity even in the Kingdom of Darkness, much more is there so in the Regions of perfect Light and Purity. It is true in *Dan. x. 13—21.* we read of Opposition and Encounters between *Michael*, one of the chief Princes, or the Arch-Angel, who had the Care of the *Jewish* People, and the Princes of *Grecia* and *Persia*; and that these Angels last mentioned presided or bore Sway among the *Grecians* and *Persians*, we cannot doubt. But then it is clear that these last were hellish Apostate Spirits, such as *St. Paul* calls the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, such as the Heathen worship'd as Gods; so that this is no more a Proof of any Discord between the Angels of Light, than the same *Michael's* Contest with *Satan*. And it is their Consent in Good that makes the Angels a happy and a heavenly Nation, that keeps them all in Favour with God, and in Love with one another. But,

II. I must next proceed to consider the various Ranks and Degrees of Angels. And here I must be short, because 'tis
K 3 but.

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but little we know, with any Certainty, of this Matter. The whole Body of Angels does often, in Scripture, pass under the Title of a Host, or Army: And every one knows, how necessary it is that there should be a Gradation of superior and inferior Officers to regulate an Army, and keep the Troops in their several Ranks and Files, and lead them on to Action. As there are private Angels, if I may so speak, there are likewise Arch-Angels, or such as have a Government over others. We read, *Dan. x. 13.* of *Michael*, who is stiled the *Arch-Angel*, *Jude 9.* that he is one of the chief Princes, or the first of the chief Princes, as it is in the Margin. Some fancy that *Michael* is the only *Arch-Angel*, and therefore translate the Words of *Dan. x. 13.* the *first of the chief Princes*, and assert, that he is the same with the Angel of the Covenant, mentioned ~~*Mat.*~~ *Mat. iii. 1.* that is, the Son of God, who afterwards became the Son of the blessed Virgin *Mary* (Messenger and Angel are the same Word in the *Hebrew*). But he is called *Michael, the Prince*, *Dan. x. 21.* by the Angel who there speaks to *Daniel*. When he calls him *your Prince*, he must mean the Prince of *Daniel's* People, that is, the *Jews*. *Michael* is never called the Angel of the Covenant, or of the great

great Decree. He is never called God, ^{SERM.} or LORD, as the second Person of the ^{III.} Trinity is, when he made his Appearance in the Ages before his Incarnation: Therefore, by the Prince of *Daniel's* People, we must suppose is meant the chief of those created Angels, to whose Superintendence God had intrusted the Nation of the *Jews*. Some are willing to have the several Ranks of Angels to be but nine, some more, some less. *St. Paul* gives us but four, *Eph. i. 24.* nor does he mention more at any other Place; nor yet is it certain that it was his Intention to distinguish them into several Orders or Degrees, when he calls them *Principalities, Powers, Might, Dominions*; and, *Col. i. 16.* instead of *Might* he puts *Thrones*. In other Places of Scripture *Seraphim* and *Cherubim* are mentioned, but whether as some of the same with those now spoken of, or as distinct from them, we cannot say upon any sure Grounds. Therefore, in fine, we are only sure that there are several Orders and Degrees of Angels, but how many, and in what their Difference consists, we must be content to be ignorant. If I were to give you my own Conjecture, I should think that, instead of *nine*, we might as well say *ninty*, or *nine hundred*, or even *nine thousand*. My Meaning

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is, that we have no Reason to doubt, but the spiritual World is as fully peopled as the material, or visible; and that therefore there are as many Ranks of Angels, as of Men; nay, as there are Species of Animals, or even Insects, on this Globe of Earth. I shall therefore only add, as *St. Paul* does, that they are all put under *Christ's Feet*, *Eph. i. 21.* he is King of Angels as well as of Men, and *all the Angels of God worship him*, *Heb. i. 6.*

III. I am to speak of the Offices of Angels. And,

I. In Relation to God; they are the Ministers of his Providence, or such as he makes use of in governing of the World. *Angel*, as I have before hinted, signifies a Messenger. And the Reason why they are so called, is, because God sends them, upon all Occasions, to execute his Will, or, as my Text expresseth it, *to fulfil his Commandments*. It is for this End they stand before him, that they may minister unto him, that they may receive his Commands, and dispatch them with all Fidelity, and this is, at once, their Honour and their Pleasure. They own themselves Servants to God, *Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 8, 9.* and have only the Prerogative of serving him with much

much greater Perfection, and in more ^{SERM.} worthy Employments, than we are ca- ^{III.}
pable of at present.

2. As to the Offices which Angels perform to Mankind in general. Only of this we are sure, that as God's Providence extends it self over the whole World, so God uses the Angels as Under-Agents in all, or most of his Dispensations toward his Creatures. It was an Angel of the Lord that smote 180000 of the *Assyrians* in one Night, *2 Kings* xix. 35. Nor are they only the Instruments of doing Justice, or inflicting Death on those that have deserved it, but they are likewise the Means of much Good to Men of all Sorts. The Angel, by troubling the Waters, made them full of healing Virtue to him that next came in, whoever, or of what Nation soever he was, *John* v. 4. This must proceed from the true good Nature of the Angel, which disposed him to be beneficent to all, without Distinction. And it is just to believe, that good Angels are all of the same Temper, and all Lovers of Mankind, but especially of those that do most resemble themselves in Sweetness of Temper, and a generous Disposition.

3. But it is much more clear, that Angels of Light do bear a special Good-will to the Church of God. And we have
all

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all the Reason in the World to believe, that good Angels are inclined to do all possible good Offices for the Church, because they themselves are Members of this Body. For now all Things are gathered together in *Christ*, *whether they be Things in Heaven, or Things in Earth*, Eph. i. 10. All intelligent Creatures are reduced together under one Head; and there the Apostle says, *We are come to an innumerable Company of Angels*, Heb. xii. 22. As they are the Fellow-Servants of the Apostles, and Prophets, and of *their Brethren*, and worship the same God, so there is just Reason to suppose, that they join with good *Christians* in worshipping this God. If I should affirm that they are some of them often, if not always, present in our publick Assemblies, I should have sufficient Authority for it from the holy Scriptures. *Isaia* saw some of them in the *Jewish Temple*, ch. vi. and sure it is as credible, that they attend our Worship, as that of the *Jews*. The Psalmist says to God, *The very Heavens shall declare thy wonderful Works in the Congregation of thy Saints*, Ps. lxxix. 5. meaning, that Angels shall join together with holy Men to magnify the Miracles of God's Providence in the publick Assemblies. We read of an *Angel offering Incense and the Prayers of Saints to God*

God on a golden Altar, Rev. viii. 3. This ^{S E R M} shews that these pious Creatures are al- ^{III.} ways ready to add their Devotions, and to mingle their Prayers with ours. Women are to behave themselves modestly, by covering their Heads, when they meet together with Men in the publick Assemblies, *because of the Angels*, 1 Cor. xi. 10. because they ought to follow the Example of the Angels, whom *Isaia* saw in the Temple, who *covered their Faces with Wings*, Is. vi. 2. out of Reverence to the Almighty. God is often, in Scripture, said to be present with People met together to worship. And it will not be easy to conceive, how he can be present at one Place, so as he is not at another, unless upon this granted Principle, that the Angels are the Ministers of his Government and Providence; and that therefore where his Angels are, there his Power and Spirit do more immediately exert themselves; or there the divine Majesty is present to accomplish such Works, or perform such Offices as are assigned to those Angels. God does therefore dwell especially in the Heaven of the Blessed, because this is the usual Abode of holy Angels, in whom God does more delight than in any other of his Creatures, and to whom therefore he is always shewing the Effects of his Love

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Love and Power; and where Multitudes of true Worshippers are joining Heart and Voice in doing Glory to God: There Angels associate themselves with these pious Men, and God's Presence is with them, and sheds spiritual Blessings upon them. God's Residence with the People of *Israel* (his then Church) was represented by two *Cherubims* standing with expanded Wings upon the Mercy-Seat, and *from above the two Cherubims will I commune with thee*, says he to *Moses*, Ex. xxv. 22. God, you see, speaks as one that dwelt between, or above the two *Cherubims*, which were Figures of the superior Sort of Angels, thereby to shew, that where these noble Creatures are, there he chooses to display his Power and Goodness. Angels are Spirits sent forth to minister to them who are Heirs of Salvation. One of the principal Employments that they have here on Earth, is to attend and overlook good *Christians*, to preserve them from falling into gross Sin, and to raise them up again, when fallen, and to punish them who were the Cause of their falling. For this seems the Meaning of our Lord, when having pronounced a Woe upon Offences, that is, such as are Leaders in Sin and Error, he farther bids Men beware how they despise his little Ones, his humble meek People,

People, by ensnaring them in Vice and Folly, and making no Account of the Mischief they do them by this Means, for, says he, *their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven.* The Angels that minister to their Salvation have great Power with God; and will prevail with him to have such Punishments inflicted on the Authors and Promoters of publick scandalous Crimes, and damnable Heresies, as they have deserved. And Woe be to them by whom they come, and to them who are involved in them, if by these blessed Spirits, and the Means used by them, they be not raised up against, and recovered from, the diabolical Snares. The Antients spake much of an Angel of Repentance, whose Care they supposed it was to recover lost Sheep, and to restore them to the true Fold, and to rejoice at the Recovery, and to invite others to rejoice with him. They could not doubt, but these affectionate Spirits had a tender Regard to the Good and Safety of those Souls to whom they were appointed to minister, and that they did all that in them lay to rescue those from Misery and Destruction, who, by their own Perverseness, and the Slight of Devils, and wicked Men, were ready to perish. As publick Crimes and Scandals

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SERMON III.  dals are the greatest Injuries that can happen to the Church, because, by these, the Numbers of her People are lessened, they that preserve themselves from the Contagion, are reproached for being of a Society that brings forth such Monsters, and they that are without, remove themselves farther from it; so the Angel of Repentance, if I may speak with the Antients, by curing these Evils, does a special Service to the Church.

Farther, the holy Angels have often relieved the Church, by cutting off, or subduing her grand Enemies and Persecutors. Thus the Angel of the Lord smote *Herod*, Acts xii. 23. *Herod who had killed James, the Brother of John, with the Sword, and had proceeded farther to take Peter also*, ver. 2, 3. Nay, that great Victory in which *Constantine* the great defeated and killed *Maxentius* the Tyrant, who was the main Support of the *Heathen* Religion against the Gospel of *Christ*, was, under God, attributed to an Army of Angels, that was seen in the Air just before the Battle was fought, and who appearing from Heaven in a very large Stature, with vigorous, cheerful Looks, and bright flaming Armour, are reported to have said, *We seek for Constantine, we are come to assist him*. This was the constant

stant and general Belief of the *Heathen*,^{S E R M.}
as well as of the *Christians* of those Times.^{III.}
And many learned Men do assert, that
the Fight of *Michael* and his Angels
of one Side, and *Satan* and his Angels
on the other, was a Prefiguration of
this War in which *Constantine* prevailed
against *Maxentius*, which was thus re-
presented in Vision to St. *John*, 212
Years before it happened. And this is
the more credible, because by means of
this Victory, the *Heathen* Idolatry was,
within a few Years, abolish'd in the
Roman Empire, and *Christianity* esta-
blished in its stead.

Nor does the Care of the Angels
extend it self only to the Church in
general, but to every particular Mem-
ber of it, to enable us to tread *Satan*
under our Feet, to comfort us under
Affliction, and in God's Time to de-
liver us out of it, to conduct us thro'
the whole Course of our Lives, and
afterwards to convoy us into *Abraham's*
Bosom; and last of all, to delight us
with their holy and blessed Conversa-
tion for evermore in the highest Hea-
vens, where we are assured, we shall
eternally dwell with them. The Pri-
mitive *Christians* went farther still. They
were of Opinion, that every single Man
had a good Angel for his Guardian.
And

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And this Opinion seems as antient as the Time of the Apostles. For the *Christians* who were assembled together, when St. Peter was believed to be still in Prison, could not easily be perswaded that it was the Apostle himself that knock'd at the Gate; therefore said they, *it is his Angel* (who probably had imitated St. Peter in his Gate and Mein, according to the Sentiments of that Age, if it had been his Angel, and not himself). And there can be no Fault or Danger in thinking, as these good old People did, that every particular *Christian* hath his particular Angel to attend and overlook him. Yet it is as great a Proof of God's Regard to us, to believe, that one or other of the Angels, though not one certain Angel, is always ready to succour and defend us; as to believe that every Man hath his proper, peculiar Angel assign'd him for this Purpose.

But while I am discoursing of Angels, and the good Offices which they do to us, I am, by no Means, to forget him that commands the Angels, and gives to every one of them their particular Charge and Province, and whom I have before hinted to be stiled *the Angel of the Covenant*, and whom the Greek Interpreters stile *the Angel of the great Decree*,

tree, Is. ix. 6. him that was sent into ^{S E R M.} the World to execute the divine Decree ^{III.} of his Father, for the Redemption of Mankind, and who, though he is called an *Angel*, yet not without some honourable additional Title, whereby he is distinguished from all Creatures, and hath a Name above every Name, and at which all Creatures are to bow the Knee; whether they be in Heaven, or in Earth. And when he first set out in his Prophetic Office, the Character which he gave of himself, to his Followers, was this: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending, under the Command of the Son of Man; not upon the Son of Man, as our Translators have rendered it, and so suspended the Sense, but under the Command of; ** for so the original Word sometimes signifies, and so the Sense of this Place necessarily requires. *Christ Jesus* could not give a greater Proof of his divine Commission, than by affirming, that the Angels, the most excellent of God's Creatures, were obedient to him. Therefore he mentions this as one of the greatest Things that they were to see, and by which they were to be convinced that he was to be the *Messiah* and Saviour of the

* Τὸν πόλεμον ἐν αὐτοῖς ποιῶντες. Vign.

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World:

S E R M. World. St. *John* records this Saying of
 III. his in his Gospel, *ch. i. 51.* and to him
 this Promise was most amply performed. For what is the whole Book of the *Revelations*, but an Account of Angels descending and ascending under the Command of our blessed Saviour? And his Apostles have assured us, that Angels ministered unto him in his Temptation, and at his Agony in the Garden, and that they attended upon him at his Resurrection, and notified it to his Disciples, and especially that at his Ascension, the Heavens were opened to receive him up to Glory; and as he shall come with his holy Angels to Judgment, so he ascended up in the same Manner, when he made his triumphal Progress through the Skies. This is what they were told by two of those Angels, who were present on this great Occasion, *Acts i. 10, 11.*

Thus you see the Offices of the Angels to minister to God, and his Church, and every Member, especially to the Head of this Church, *Jesus Christ*, whose Authority among these holy Creatures is undisputed, and absolutely irresistible; and who, though he vouchsafes to be called an *Angel of the Covenant*, yet is, in Truth, the Sovereign of the whole Host of Heaven, and exalted far
 above

above all Principalities and Powers, and therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is worshiped and glorified. SERM.
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Most of that I have said of Angels, especially as they are the Ministers of God's Providence, will be illustrated by a particular View of the Vision of *Ezekiel*, *ch. i. 4---26*. And we shall at the same Time be led into the Meaning of this Context of Scripture, which, at first Sight; seems as difficult as any in the Bible. The whole is a figurative Representation of the divine Presence, encompass'd, and carried, as I may so say, by Angels: It begins to be open'd *ver. 4. I look'd, and behold a Whirlwind came out of the North, a great Cloud and Fire infolding it self, and Brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the Colour of Amber, out of the midst of the Fire.* God is said to come *flying upon the Wings of the Wind*, *Pf. xviii. 10.* and he answered Job, *out of the Whirlwind*, *ch. xxxviii. 1.* The Cloud and Fire are the common Tokens of the divine Presence throughout the Old Testament. This Fire and Cloud comes out of the North. For the Prophet, though far distant from *Jerusalem*, yet had all Things described to him, as if he had now been in that City: And on the North Side of that City stood the Temple, and there-

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fore from thence proceeded this Emblem of the divine Presence: So again *Job xxxviii. 22. The golden [Cloud] (our Translators have unwarily turn'd it, Fair Weather cometh, &c.) the Token of the divine Presence, cometh out of the North. The Brightness round about the Fire, and the Amber Colour out of the midst of it, serve to set forth and adorn this Token of the divine Presence. It is said, the Fire infolded it self, or was wreathed together like the several Streaks of a Flash of Lightning. Ver. 5. Out of the midst thereof came the Likeness of four living Creatures.* The Prophet here shews the inclosed innermost Part of the symbolical Glory, or Shekina. For what he is now going to describe, came out from the midst of the Cloud and Fire. And it had *four living Creatures*, Cherubims, or Angels of a high Rank, which stood at the four Corners of a Square. There were but two Cherubims placed on the Mercy-Seat by *Moses*, here are four, to shew us, that this was an Improvement of his Mysteries. *They had the Likeness of a Man*, that is, they all stood with their Bodies erect, which is the distinguishing Posture of a Man. And as Man is the most noble Creature in the visible World, so is an Angel in the invisible. *Ver. 6. Every*

Every one had four Faces; what these four Faces were we shall see at ver. 10. and every one four Wings, as we shall see ver. 11. SERM
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Ver. 7. Their Feet were straight Feet. Feet, according to the Hebrew Idiom, often signifies all the Parts from the Wastle to the very Heel, and so we must take the Word here: They had no Joints, or Bendings, downwards, which denotes the Strength and Firmness of the Angelical Nature, and their inflexible Progress in their Duty. The Sole of their Feet, or rather *the Foot it self, was like the Foot of a Calf, or Bullock.* No Creature is observed to go more sure and steady than this, and therefore in this Respect it is a fit Emblem of Angels that never make a false Step. *They sparkled like the Colour of burnished Brass.* There is nothing base, low, or vile in an Angel. What is least honourable in them is really glorious, if compared to other Creatures. *Ver. 8. And they had the Hands of a Man under their Wings on their four Sides; and they four had their Faces, and their Wings.* As every one had their four Faces and four Wings, so under every Wing was the Hand of a Man. Whatever is here on Earth commendably artificial is performed by the Hands of Men, and they had a Hand under every Wing

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to express their Skill and Dexterity in all Affairs. The Number of their Hands shews the surpassing Abilities in this Respect; and in that these Hands were hid under their Wings, we may from thence learn the secret and invisible Nature of that Wisdom, by which they act and perform their wonderful Operations.

Ver. 9. Their Wings were joined one to another. This will best be explained *ver. 11. They turned not as they went.* Every one of their Heads having four Faces, they appeared to go fore-right to whatever Quarter they removed; the Words may be turned, *they set no Compass, made no Obliquities, they went every one straight forward.* By this the Rectitude of the Wills and Actions in these holy Creatures is set forth to us, that they use no Shifts, no Turnings, or Windings, in their Actions, but went directly on to fulfil God's Commands in the Way appointed by him.

Ver. 10. As for the Likeness of their Faces, they four had the Face of a Man, and the Face of a Lyon on the right Side; and they four had the Face of an Ox on the left Side, and they four had the Face of an Eagle. One Thing is very plain in this Verse, that every one of the four Cherubims had four Faces, as I before intimated. The Face of a Man denotes the

the Compassion of Angels, but especially ^{S E R M.} their Understanding and Prudence, which ^{III.} is the principal Ornament of Men as well as Angels; the Face of the Lyon, their Courage and Vigor; that of an Ox, their Patience and Industry in doing Good; that of an Eagle, their Sagacity and sharp Sight, their strong Tendency toward Heaven, and their Readiness and Expedition in doing the Will of God. Or these four Creatures may be considered as the most perfect Animals here on Earth; and every one of the Cherubims having the Face of these four Animals, may signify, that they being a Compound of all four, are therefore the most perfect of any Creatures whatsoever. There is another Thing contained in these Words, and that is the Situation or Bearings of the several Faces toward the Left-hand, and the Right-hand. In the Situation the Prophet now was, the foremost Face on the Head of each Animal was that of a Man, the Face on the right Side of the Head was that of a Lyon, on the left Side that of an Ox, and last of all, on the hindermost Part of every one of the four Heads, was that of an Eagle. So I pass to

Ver. 11. Thus were their Faces; and their Wings were stretched upwards, in a Posture fit for Flight, to express
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their

S E R M. ^{III.} their Forwardness and Activity in doing the Will of God. *Two Wings of every one were join'd to one another; as the Wings of the old Cherubim over the Mercy-Seat, Ex. xxv. 20. 1 Kings vi. 27. to shew that they were, every one of them, conspiring together in the same Will and Design, of doing the Will of God with an uniform Harmony, and that when one of them took its Flight, the others would not be long behind. And two covered their Bodies.* This was to signify their Modesty. In *Isaia's* Vision each of the Seraphim had six Wings, with two of which his Face was covered; these have but four, and therefore their Faces are left uncovered. Nor had they Occasion to cover their Faces, because they stood under the Throne to support it, as we shall presently see: Whereas *Isaia's* stood *above* the Basis, or Ascent to the Throne, and so directly before the divine Presence, and covered their Faces, to shew that they were not able to bear the Rays of its Glory.

Ver. 12. is a Repetition of the latter Part of *ver. 9.* *They went every one straight forward, they turned not, or set no Compass, &c.* which was to shew, that the Rectitude of the Angelic Nature, and of the Proceedings of God's Providence, was one main Point to be learn'd



learn'd from the present Representation. But it is likewise said in this Verse, *Whether the Spirit was to go they went*, that is, they took that Course which the divine Impulse directed them to, Angels do not follow their own Wills, but are carried wholly by the Will of God.

Ver. 13. As for the Likeness of the living Creatures, their Appearance was like burning Coals of Fire, and like the Appearance of Lamps; it went up and down among the living Creatures, and out of the Fire went forth Lightening. Angels are frequently compared to Fire, on Account of the Splendor of their Understanding, and the Vigor and Force by which they act: And here all the four Cherubims seemed to be but one Mixture of Fire and Flame, Lamps and Lightening flashing from every one to every one;

As is intimated *ver. 14. For the living Creatures ran, and returned*, Tho' they did not turn, or set a Compass, yet when they had gone their appointed Distance one Way, they went another, and they did this, as *the Appearance of a Flash of Lightening*, with the utmost Swift-ness, and with an Efficacy that nothing could withstand. And by this fiery Nature of the living Creatures, it is probably inti-
mated

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mated to us, that they were of that Order of Angels called *Seraphim*, meaning that they shine with Light and Flame.

*Ver. 15. Now as I beheld the living Creatures, behold one Wheel upon the Earth, by the living Creature, with his four Faces; but these last Words should rather be turned, Behold one Wheel on the Earth near the living Creatures, (meaning between each two of the living Creatures) at its four Out-sides; importing that there was a Wheel at every Side of the Square *. So there were four Wheels as well as four living Creatures. Ver. 16. The Appearance of the Wheels, and their Work, was like unto the Colour of a Beryl (precious Stone) that is, Azure, or Sky Colour, mixed with a bright Green. This was to shew, that the very Wheels of the divine Chariot had something that was heavenly and glorious in it. And they four had all one Likeness, and their Appearance and Work was, as it were a Wheel in the midst of a Wheel, that is, each Wheel had another, of equal Bigness, crossing its Diameter, or cutting it at right Angles. By this Means every Wheel had four Sides, or Quarters, and so all the Wheels could move at once, as well the*

* מַחְלָה is Substantive antecedent to י in וְכָל הַמַּחְלָה

Wheels

Wheels behind and before, as on the two ^{S E R M.} Sides, without changing their Posture. ^{III.} And as it follows, *ver. 17. When they went, they went upon their four Sides, or Quarters, and they returned not, rather fetch'd no Compass, made no Obliquities as they went.* It hath been already once and again observed of the four living Creatures, that they fetch'd no Compass, but always went right forward, and now the same Observation is made concerning the Wheels; to shew that God's Providence, and the Angels, who are the Instruments of it, draw no crooked Lines, but all their Proceedings are exactly right and straight.

Ver. 18. As for their Rings, or Strakes, they were so high, that they were dreadful; they were of so vast a Circumference, as to create a Terror in the Prophet that beheld them. And hereby we are taught the wonderful Heights and Depths of God's Proceedings with Men, and of the Designs and Works which he accomplisheth by Angels. Some learned Men think these Words may best be turned thus, as to the Strakes, they were high, and shewed Fear, Awe, or Reverence. They were not stupid, senseless Strakes, they knew their Duty, and perceiv'd the divine Presence, and express'd their Devotion toward the divine Majesty,

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Majesty, to whom they now ministred. In Truth, these Wheels and Strakes were composed of Angels. For so it appears by the next Words---*Their Rings were full of Eyes round about them four.* And thus both the living Creatures and the Wheels are described again as full of Eyes, *ch. x. 12.* So *St. John's living Creatures had Eyes both before and behind,* *Rev. iv. 6.* And this instructs us in the Wisdom of the Angels as Ministers of Providence, that they are truly circumspect, and look every Way at once. The very Strakes of the Wheel of God's Providence, which denote the great Changes and Revolutions made by it, are full of Eyes. They turn, or move not, without the greatest Discretion, without first looking both backward and forward; and the least Angel, or Minister, that he uses in this Case, hath Eyes behind as well as before.

Ver. 19. And when the living Creatures went, the Wheels went by or near them, and when the living Creatures were lift up from the Earth, the Wheels were lift up. This was intended to shew the perfect Consent and unanimous Harmony between the superior Angels, or Cherubim, and the inferior Angels, of which the Wheels were composed.

Ver.

Ver. 20. Whither soever the Spirit, or ^{S E R M.}
divine Impulse, was to go they went, ^{III.}
thither was their Spirit to go, and the
Wheels were lifted up over-against them:
For the Spirit of the living Creatures
was in the Wheels. Here the Reason of
 their Unanimity is assigned, viz. that
 they were all animated by the same
 Principle of Motion, directed by one,
 and the same secret Energy, which was
 from God.

Ver. 21. When those went, these went,
when those stood, these stood, and when
those were lifted up from the Earth, these
were lifted up over-against them. It is
 evident the Prophet thought this mutual
 Consent of the Angelical Spirits a Point
 that deserved most of all to be observed,
 and therefore dwells upon it more than
 any other Particular, especially because
 it did not proceed from any physical Ne-
 cessity. For here is no mention of any
 Axle-tree by which the living Creatures
 and Wheels were join'd together. The
 living Creatures were not fastened to the
 Chariot, did not go before and draw the
 Wheels by outward Force; they were
 only near to, or by each other, not tied,
 or nail'd together. But the Reason given
 for their moving or standing still toge-
 ther is this: That the Spirit of the living
 Creatures was in the Wheels, the same
 free,

S. E. R. M.

III.

free, voluntary Force which was first in the living Creatures, was, by them, communicated to the Wheels. And as we cannot doubt but this directive Impulse was from God, so these blessed Spirits; by their unanimous Compliance with it; did plainly express their ready Obedience to the divine Will. And you will observe; that it is said in this, and each of the two foregoing Verses; that both the living Creatures and Wheels were sometimes *lifted up from the Earth*, which shews their Agility; not only the living Creatures that had Wings, but the Wheels which were composed of inferior Sort of Spirits, wanted no Ground to support them, but could raise themselves at Discretion aloft in the Air to any Height.

Ver. 22. And the Likeness of the Firmament, or Canopy upon the Heads of the living Creatures, was as the Colour of the terrible, or admirable, Crystal, stretched forth over their Heads above. This Firmament, or Canopy, was in Imitation of the Sky.

And under the Firmament (ver. 23.) were their Wings straight, or rather even, the one toward the other. All these four Cherubims knew their Distance, with Regard to the sovereign Majesty that sat above them, and therefore contented themselves with their Situation under the
the

the Firmament, or Canopy. And being all four of the same Order, one did not attempt to lift his Wings higher than the other. There was no Ambition or Emulation between them, nor did any one of them lift up himself against their Almighty Lord. *Every one of them had two [Wings] with which he covered his Body on this Side, and two with which he covered [his Body] on that Side.* These Words are to be understood of the living Creatures, when standing still, or *clapping their Wings* (as the LXX. understand them) by way of Joy and Exultation, for having accomplished the Work on which they were employ'd.

But as it follows *ver. 24. When they went, I heard the Noise of their Wings like the Noise of great Waters, as the Voice of the Almighty, that is, like Thunder, as the Voice of Speech, as the Noise of an Host.* This is but an Explanation of that Figure, whereby Angels are called the Host, or Army of God, *viz.* because they carry Terror and Destruction with them, against such as are in Rebellion against their God and Sovereign, Horror and Astonishment to the wicked World. And it is probable that this whole Vision was an emblematical Prediction of that exemplary Work of Justice which God was going to do upon his

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S E R M. his own People, the Jews, whom he
 III. caused to be conquered and taken Captive by the *Babylonians*, or *Chaldeans*, as outward Instruments, but by his Angelical Armies, if you respect the real invisible Agents:

Ver. 25. And there was a Voice from the Firmament over their Heads, when they stood still, and had let down their Wings. Some render the Words, When there was a Voice from the Firmament, &c. they stood, and let down, &c. Both Senses are very good; and do imply, that either in moving; or standing still, these holy Creatures obey the divine Will, when intimated to them. But how can Angels, as Ministers of Providence, be said to stand still? I answer, when they have executed the Commission given to them by God, they stay to receive another. When they have discharged God's Anger against any Man, or Body of Men, they stop their Hands, and begin to mingle Mercy with Judgment.

I have only to add, that above this Firmament, or Canopy, was a *Throne*, above upon it was the Appearance of a Man, ver. 26. And this was the *Likeness of the Glory of God*, ver. 28. *Ver. 24. The Voice of the Wings is compared to the Voice of the Almighty, and to the Voice*

Voice of Speech, or the Voice of the ^{S E R M.} WORD, the second Person in the holy ^{III.} Trinity. From which we may safely conclude, that by the *Man* is meant the Son of God, who is also call'd the Son of Man, and did often appear in human Shape before the Incarnation. He is the God who rode in the Angelical Chariot, this glorious Chair of State. And thus *the Chariot of God is twenty thousand even thousands of Angels.* Thus Angels are Thrones, on which God repositeth himself.

1. From what hath been said we learn to admire and honour the Angelical Host, on Account of their Dignity, Purity, Nearness to God; their Strength, the Perspicacity of their Understanding; the Sureness of their proceeding without any Slip or Mistake; the Dexterity of their Actions and Operations, far beyond our present Conceptions; the Agility and Swiftmess of their Motions; the unwearied Force which they exercise in Obedience to God, and in Opposition to Rebels; the vast astonishing Compass of the Works and Affairs in which they are imploy'd, and the amazing Revolutions thereby caused in the World. And how much more should we admire and honour the great God,

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lencies,

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lencies, and whom alone therefore we are to worship! When I speak of honouring Angels, I only mean, speaking respectfully of them, and retaining a just Sense of the Eminence and Holiness of their Nature, and of the Benefits that Mankind, and we our selves in particular, receive from their Ministrations.

2. In some Particulars we ought to admire, as to imitate them, so far as our Natures will permit, viz. in the Rectitude of their Ways and Doings; inflexible Perseverance in what is our Duty; Expedition, Readiness, and Courage against Sin, and for God and Virtue; Patience in well doing; Modesty, and Humility toward God, and each other; Abhorrence of all Pride and Ambition; and especially in that which the Prophet seems to magnify above all the rest, the Unanimity of our Obedience, being of one Heart and one Soul in the Services we pay to God, praying to him, and praising him, with one Heart and one Voice. And we shall never worship God like Angels, till we do it in this Manner. Then God's Will is done in Earth, as 'tis done in Heaven, when 'tis done with an harmonious Uniformity.

3. There is one Particular in which we are often actually to join in with Angels,

Angels, I mean, in the publick solemn Praises of God. I have already shewed you, that Angels frequent the Places where God is worship'd. And such good Business cannot be done, but that all who are piously inclin'd (if present) will join in it. Above all, they are ever disposed to send their Praises to the divine Majesty for his Redemption of the World by *Christ Jesus*. This is the principal End of the holy Communion, and there we are taught by the Church, *with Angels, and Arch-Angels, and with all the Company of Heaven, to laud and magnify God's glorious Name*.---This Hymn was first sung by Angels, *Is. vi. 3*. The most antient Liturgies of the Christian Church make it a Part of the Communion-Service. There is no Part of our Liturgy, except the Lord's Prayer, and the Words of Institution, that were so early in the Communion-Service as this Hymn; so that when we rehearse it in our Church, we may have the secret Comfort of having the whole Church, old and new, primitive and modern, the whole Church in Heaven and Earth, consisting of Angels and Men, joining in the same Chorus, and communicating together with us in our Devotion.

4. From hence we may learn what is the principal Honour we are to aim at,

M 2

when

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III.
when we shall be like, or equal to the Angels, that is, to be one of those that shall compose a Chariot, or Chair of State, for the divine Majesty; that is, in plain Terms, to be as near to God as the Chariot, or Chair, to them that sit in them; to be the Creatures in whom God chiefly delights, the Creatures in, and by whom he performs his greatest Works of Providence, among, and with whom he is not only present, but graciously present, upon whom he is always shedding Rays of Joy and Comfort, to whom he shall always be communicating the Treasures of his Wisdom and Goodness, upon whom he shall ever shine with the Light of his Countenance, whom he shall perpetually imploy in Affairs of the greatest Moment, and the highest Pleasure, and whom he shall crown with the largest Portions of Dignity and Glory. And in order to obtain this Happiness, it should be our first and principal Care, to imitate the Purity of Angels; so we shall become Fellow-Servants with them in this Life, and Co-heirs with them in that which is to come.

S E R.

SERMON IV.

OF THE

Death of *CHRIST*.

ACTS II. 31, 32.

He seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither did his Flesh see Corruption.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all Witnesses.

THESE Words are Part of that SERMON
 Sermon, which St. Peter preach'd IV.
 on the Day of Pentecost, when the
 HOLY GHOST, sent by our Saviour, de-
 scended on the Apostles. The chief De-
 sign of St. Peter, in this Discourse, was
 to prove, that *Christ was raised from the*
 M 3 Dead,

S E R M.

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Dead, and that he had ascended into Heaven: The Matter of Fact, that he was raised, he proves by the Testimony of himself, and his Brethren: This Jesus both God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses: And that the Messias was to be raised, he proves from the Words of David in the 16th Psalm, ver. 8, &c. for David, (says St. Peter ver. 25.) speaketh concerning him (the Messias:) I foresaw the Lord always before my Face; for he is on my Right-hand, that I should not be moved, therefore did my Heart rejoice, and my Tongue was glad; moreover also my Flesh shall rest in Hope, because thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see Corruption. Thou hast made known to me the Ways of Life, thou shalt make me full of Joy with thy Countenance. And having thus cited the Words at large, he applies them to our blessed Saviour (ver. 29.) Men, and Brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead, and buried, and his Sepulchre is with us unto this Day; and therefore the Prophecy cannot, in Strictness, be apply'd to his own Person; for, as he has now lain buried many hundred Years, so it cannot in Reason be supposed, but that his Flesh hath seen Corruption. And thus St. Paul proves, that

Dauid,

Acts xiii.
36.

David, in this Place, could not prophecy of himself, because he was *laid to his Fathers, and saw Corruption*; but St. Peter goes on to prove, that David meant these Words of the *Messias* (ver. 30.) therefore, says he, *David being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loyns, according to the Flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his Throne, he seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that his Soul was not left in Hell, &c.* from which Words I shall,

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IV.

I. Shew that our Saviour's Soul was in Hell.

II. The great Assurance we have that it was delivered from thence by the Resurrection: *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses.*

III. The great Importance of this Truth.

I. I am to shew that our Saviour's Soul was in Hell; and here,

1. I must explain what is meant by *Hell*. 2. And prove that our Saviour's Soul went thither. And by explaining the Meaning of the Word, I shall, in

M 4

Effect,

SERM. Effect, prove, by unavoidable Consequence, that our Saviour's Soul went to Hell.

I. What is meant by *Hell*. And tho' this be very plain to one vers'd in the Greek and Hebrew Tongue, yet it is not so to a common *Englishman*. For it must be owned, that the Word has in the *English* two remarkable Significations.

(1.) It signifies *eternal Torments*, as where it is said of him *who calls his Brother Fool* without Cause, that is, who is guilty of very gross Calumny without any just Grounds, *he shall be cast into Hell-Fire*: And of him that does not cut off his Right-hand, and pluck out his Right-eye, when they offend him, that is, when they cause him to sin, that *he shall be cast into Hell*: And where God is characterized as one, that is, *able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*. And where a Woe is pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees, for making their Proselytes three times more Children of Hell, than they were before. And where our Saviour asks the same Sort of Men, *how they can escape the Damnation of Hell*? And to mention no more, where St. James says of a malicious Tongue, *that it is set on Fire of Hell*. In all these twelve Places the Word *Hell* infallibly

Matt. v.

22.

ver. 29, 30.

Matt.

xviii. 9.

Mark ix.

43, 45, 47.

x. 28.

Luke xii.

5.

xxiii. 15.

ver. 31.

Ja. iii. 6.

fallibly denotes the State of eternal Misery. SERM.
IV.

And it deserves our Observation, that in all these Texts the Word is *Tesura* in the original Greek, a Word very distinct, and, for the most part, if not always, of a different Signification from the Word *Adms*, which is in the Words which are the Subject of my present Discourse. That which has created Confusion in the Minds of common Readers, is, that our *English* Translators have turn'd two Greek Words of two Senses so remote from each other, by the same *English* Word, I mean, *Hell*. If they had always rendered *Tesura* by *Hell*, and turn'd *Adms* by some other distinct Word, any *Englishman* would more easily and certainly have known the Meaning. But,

2. I must observe to you, that, in some Places, they turn the Word *Adms*, by the *English*, *Hell*, where it signifies no more than the State of the Dead, or the Place where separate Souls, both good and bad, are kept for the Day of Judgment. The most observable Place in the New Testament, except my Text, to this Purpose, is in the Revelations, where *Death and Hell deliver up their Dead, and every* Rev. xx.
13. 14.
Man is judged according to his Works. Where by *Hell* you can understand nothing but the Dominion, or Territories,

or

S E R M. of those invisible Places, where the Souls
 IV. of dead Men are reserved for the Day of
 Resurrection. *Death* has the Souls of all
 Men of former Ages, excepting, perhaps,
Enoch and *Elias* under its Dominion,
 and *Death* and *Hell* here signifies the
 same, they are to resign not only the
 Bad, but the Good too, to be judged
 and treated according to their Works.
 It is therefore evident, that *Hell* here
 signifies the Place and State of all the
 Dead. In the next Words *Death* and
Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire,
 now the Fire into which they are to be
 cast, is what we call *Hell*, in common
 Discourse, and what passes by that Name
 in the twelve Texts before mentioned.
Hell therefore that is there represented as
 cast into the Lake, can be none other,
 than the *State or Empire of that Place,*
where the Souls of dead Men are lodged
 It is evident, that, in this Text, the
Lake of Fire is the Place of Torments,
 and therefore that *Hell*, which is cast
 into the *Lake*, must be somewhat distinct
 from the *Lake* it self. If it be ask'd how
 the State of Death can be supposed to
 be capable of suffering, or how it is con-
 sistent with good Sense to say, that one
 Place was cast into another? I can on-
 ly say, that it seems probable, that by
Death, here is, in Strictness, meant the
 Angel

Angel of Death, or he who had the ^{S E R M.}
Power of Death, that is, the Devil, ^{I V.}
Heb. xi. 14. who is called the *Destroyer*,
Ex. xii. 23. *1 Cor. x. 10.* what is said of
a Place is often meant of the Governours
of it. Thus we say *France*, or *Spain*,
broke a League, or violated Faith, when
our Meaning is, that the Kings of those
Countries did it. So *Hades* may be said
to be cast into the Lake, when it is
meant only of those vile Angels that
reigned there. The same Greek Word is
used by St. Paul, *O Hades, where is thy* ^{1 Cor. xv.}
Victory! we have it, *O Grave!* in our
English Translation, but the Word un-
doubtedly signifies the *Place and State*
of the Dead, which is spoken of as a
Principality, or Empire, under the An-
gels of Death, which Christ hath, in
some Measure, vanquished. We have the
same Word used, and translated *Hell*, in
that remarkable Text, where our Savi-
our promises, that the *Gates of Hell* ^{Matt. xvi.}
shall not prevail against his Church. Here ^{18.}
Hades is again represented as a strong
City, or State, with fortify'd Gates, and
when it is said, that the Strength of
Hades shall not prevail against the
Church, the Meaning is, that the
Church of Christ is immortal, and can-
not be extinguish'd, all the Powers of
Death and Darkness cannot demolish it;
the

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S E R M. the particular Members of it may die,
 IV. but the Church it self shall always survive, and remain so long as the World endures. And we have all the Reason that can be to believe this, if we consider, that Christ hath himself now the

Rev. i. 18. *Keys of Death and Hell*, that is, *Hades* is reduced under his Dominion. I remember but one more remarkable Place, where the Word is used in the New Testament, and that is in the parabolical

Luke xvi. History of the rich Man and *Lazarus*.
 23. We are told of the rich Man, that in *Hell* he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments. If ~~and~~ ever signify a State of Misery, 'tis in this Text; yet divers learned Men do understand the Words thus, viz. that by his being in *Hell*, is intimated only in general, that he was, as to his Soul, in that invisible Place, whither the Souls of all do resort at their Death, and by his being in Torments, that he was in that Part of *Hades* where the wicked Souls, not where the good are.

[Hades]

Hell, when it signifies the Place of Misery which was prepared for the Devils and wicked Men, consists only of one capacious Region, where all the rebellious Men and Angels shall reside from the Day of Judgment to all Eternity; but *Hades*, which is in my Text, call'd

call'd *Hell*, is that most exceedingly capacious Place, where all Souls are assembled, from the Day of Death to the Day of Judgment; and in it there are two grand Apartments, one for the Good, the other for the Bad, and a Gulf fix'd between them. That Part of *Hades* to which the Good are assigned, is called *Paradise*, and to this Part of *Hades* our Saviour's Soul went. For our Saviour told the Thief, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. The other Part is called *Tartarus*. For St. Peter tells us, that God cast *the Angels that sinned into Tartarus*. Which our English Translators turn *Hell*, but not with due Exactness. Both they that are in *Paradise*, and they that are in *Tartarus*, are in *Hades*, but they who are in *Paradise*, are not in *Tartarus*; so both they that are in *England*, and they that are in *Scotland*, are in *Great-Britain*; but they who are in *England*, are not in *Scotland*, and *vice versa*.

And though *Hell* do most commonly signify the Place of eternal Misery in the Life to come in our Language, yet not without some Exceptions. It is certain, that in the old Translation of our *Psalms* it often signifies the Place of separated Souls. As where it is said, *What Man is he that shall not see Death, and shall de-*
liver

SERMON. *liver his Soul from the Hand of Hell?*

IV.



'Tis unreasonable to believe, that the Psalmist, or the Translators, should suppose it impossible to deliver ourselves from eternal Torments. Many, by the Grace of God, in all Ages, have done this, but none can indeed deliver himself from Death in this World, or from the Place, or State into which separated Souls are assembled in the other World. Mr. *Ainsworth* was, I think, the most learned Dissenter that ever was in *England*. He translated the five Books of *Moses* into *English*. And in the 37th Chapter of *Gen.* ver. 35. he thus turns the Words of *Jacob* concerning his Son *Joseph*: *I will go down to my Son to Hell*; yet he was far from thinking, that *Jacob* was under any Apprehensions, that he was to go to a Place of Misery, therefore he has this Note upon it. "By this *Hell* is "not meant the Place of the Damn'd, "but of all that go out of this World. "*Jacob* therefore, by going down to "*Hell*, means a departing out of this "Life, into the common Place and State "of the Dead, whither all must go." And it is in this Sense that we are to understand the Word here in my Text, as also in the Creed, where it is said, *Christ descended into Hell*, that is, into the Place where the Souls of all departed, from

from the Beginning of the World, are kept for the Judgment-Day, to be tried according to their Works; and he particularly took up his Residence, for about 37 or 38 Hours, among them that are in that Part or Quarter of *Hades*, called *Paradise*. S E R M.
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It must be owned, that many learned Men, both antient and modern, do believe farther, that he went also to the other Apartment in *Hades*, which is called *Tartarus*, and that he there preached to them who lived before the Flood, and died in their Sins. And this Notion they built upon that Text of St. Peter, who having said, that *Christ was put to Death in the Flesh, but quicken'd by the Spirit*; he adds, *by which (Spirit) also he went, and preach'd to the Spirits in Prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah.* And that by the *Spirits in Prison*, is meant the Souls of those Antients who lived before the Flood, and died by it, and after Death committed to the infernal Prison, there is no doubt: The Difficulty is, to determine, when Christ preached to these Spirits; whether between his Death and Resurrection, or whether he did it before they were put into this Prison, and even before the Flood. There is little Doubt to be made, that

1 Eph. iiii.
18, 19.

SERM. that Christ did preach to *Noah*; and the
 IV. Men of his Time. He was the *Lord*, in
 whole Eyes *Noah* found Grace, and who
 Gen. vi. 8, said to *Noah*, *The End of all Flesh is*
 13. *come before me, and behold I will destroy*
the Earth. And thus did Christ preach
 to them, whom the Apostles might call
 Spirits in Prison, not because they were
 actually in Prison when Christ preached
 to them, but because they were then in
 Prison, when St. *Peter* wrote this Epistle;
 and this Exposition is now generally fol-
 lowed by the most learned *Protestants*.
 But if we should grant, as some very ju-
 dicious *Protestants* have done, that Christ
 went to those Spirits between the Time
 of his Death and Resurrection, and
 preach'd to them; nay, if we suppose,
 that he converted them, and dismissed
 them out of Prison, I see no Danger in
 this Doctrine; if it be at the same Time
 asserted, that no others have Reason to
 expect the same Favour at Christ's Hands.
 Our Saviour might, as other Princes, open
 the Prison Doors for some that were un-
 der Custody, only to adorn the Triumph
 of his Coronation, that is, his Resurrecti-
 on, without intending thereby to give
 any Encouragement to Men to expect
 any such Favour hereafter. So then the
 most that can be concluded from this
 Text, is, that Christ went to *Tartarus*,
 to

to the Prison in *Hades*, as well as to the other Part called *Paradise*; and that he went thither not to undergo any Pain or Punishment, but to preach his Gospel to some Prisoners there, whom he thought to be proper Objects of his Mercy; but I apprehend, that most will be of Opinion, that Christ preach'd unto them not in *Hades*, after their Death, but while they were alive: He preach'd to *Noah* in Person, and sent him to preach to the rest; and they were afterwards put into this Gaol for not harkening to Christ, and to *Noah*, who was under Christ a *Preacher of Righteousness*.

2. However this is clear, and allowed by all, that our Saviour *descended into Hell, Hades*; the only Question is, what is meant by that Word, and, I suppose, there can be no certain Grounds to believe, that he went to the Place of eternal Misery, much less, that he went thither to suffer Hell-Torments, as some have vainly imagined; nor does *Hades* ever carry this Signification; but that he went into the State and Place of deceased Souls is very evident, and allow'd by all; that he was in that Part of it where good Men expect a happy Resurrection, is demonstrable; for he was in *Paradise* with the penitent Thief; whether he went also to the Prison, or *Tartarus*, is not for

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very

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very certain; or if the Fact be certain, as some would argue from that Text of *St. Peter*, yet, I suppose, that it is a Matter of mere Speculation, and does not concern the Faith or Practice of a Christian. But that Christ's Soul went into the Place where the Souls of other Men, and particularly of good Men, are reserved for the Day of Judgment, this is indeed Matter of very considerable Importance. For,

1. From hence we may learn how completely our Saviour performed the Part of a Redeemer, and took upon himself the Infirmities of our Nature. He was not only born, and liv'd, and dy'd, like other Men, but, as his Body was buried, so his Soul was disposed of in the Regions or Dominions of Death, as the Souls of other good Men are; and so was in every Thing made like unto us, Sin only excepted; this was a necessary Part of his Humiliation, and without this he had not fully undergone the Laws of Mortality.

2. From hence it is evident, that we serve a Lord and Master, who is Conqueror of Death it self. Our Saviour descended into the Regions of Death, that he might fight and vanquish him, upon his own Ground. If he had not yielded himself Prisoner to this King of Terrors,

he

he could not have given an effectual Proof, that he was so much his Superior. It was necessary that we should be fully convinced, that Christ has a Power over Death. For though he himself is no longer a Subject of that King, though he remained only some few Hours, part of three Days as an Inhabitant, or rather as a travelling Conqueror, in his Dominions; yet it is certain, that the Generality of Men are to continue there till the Day of Judgment, and it was therefore fit and necessary, that, though he was not left in *Hades*, yet we should have some Assurance, that we shall not be left there; and now by going thither, as he did, only to see and conquer, he has given us a Demonstration that this Enemy is not invincible.

3. And that therefore we, by this Means, have a strong Consolation, who have fled for a Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before us. We must all die, and the Thoughts of Death are, by Nature, very unagreeable to us. Not only our Bodies must lie in the Grave, but our Souls must go to *Hades*; if we have been evil, to the *Tartarian* Prison; if we have been good, to *Paradise* to *Abraham's* Bosom. We have indeed no Reason to suspect, that this is a Place like to the *Romish* Purgatory, or Limbo, full of

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III.

good Men would have Reason still to be afraid of Death; but Christ hath removed all such Fears from our Minds; we are to go (if we are his sincere Disciples) to *Paradise*, which, though it be a Place inferior in all Respects to Heaven, yet the very Name imports something of Pleasure and Enjoyment, though nothing like to that which we are promised at the great Day of Recompence. I know it is a common Opinion, that the Souls of all good Men go directly to Heaven, but the Apostle teaches the contrary Doctrine in the 34th Verse of this Chapter, where he expressly tells us, that *David is not ascended into the Heavens*; and if he was not then in Heaven, there is no Reason to believe, that he is there now; and if *David's* Soul be not in Heaven, we have no Reason to think, that the Soul of any of the most righteous Men are yet arrived in that Place of perfect Happiness. No, we are assured, that they, without us, shall not be made perfect, *Heb. xii. ult.* Our Saviour hath sanctify'd and sweeten'd the State of Death to all true Believers, by going thither in his own Person, and when we die, we shall go to no other Place, but that to which our Saviour himself descended. We have Reason to believe, that

Of the Death of CHRIST. 197,

that the State of good Men after Death, ^{S E R M.} is much preferable to the best Condition ^{IV.} we can expect in this Life. St. Paul thus hints the Condition of deceased Saints; *To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* ^{Phil. i. 23.} He supposes it is far more desirable than our present Being here upon Earth: Nay, he intimates, that when we depart, we shall be with Christ, that is, we shall be under his Custody and Protection, and rest in full Hope and Expectance of having our Glory perfected; but we shall not see him, as he is, Face to Face, *till he appears,* ^{1 Joh. iii. 2.} that is, till he comes to judge the World.

So then the Death of *Christ Jesus*, and what was consequent upon it, *his Descent into Hell*, may be considered not only as beneficial to our Souls, as being designed for the Pardon of our Sins, and making us eternally and perfectly happy, both in Body and Soul after the Resurrection; but to free us from the Fear and Terror of Death, which is not only engrafted in our Nature, but set home to us, by this Consideration, that Death, or a Separation of the Soul from the Body, is an Effect and Punishment of Sin. For if our first Parents and we had remained innocent, neither they nor we should have died, but have been immortal.

N 3

For

- S E R M. For Death enter'd into the World by
 IV. Sin, and Death passes upon all Men in
 Ro. v. 12. that all have sinned; and we are assured,
 that the Devil had the Power of Death:
 Heb. ii. 14. *Hades* was entirely under his Dominion,
 while Mankind lived by the Law of
Moses and Nature, but now our Saviour,
 through his Death, hath overcome him;
 that formerly had this Empire; Principa-
 lities and Powers are now made subject
 to Christ. He went to *Hades* to take
 Rev. i. 18. Possession of it. He has' the *Keys of*
Death and Hades delivered to him, so
 that at the Day of Judgment he will take
 all those Souls that are there detained, in
 order to bring them to his Tribunal, and
 reward them according to their Works;
 and in the mean Time we are assured,
 that his faithful Disciples, though they
 are in *Hades*, yet they are in the most de-
 sirable Apartment of it, and under the
 peculiar Care and Guardianship of Christ;
 and by giving us Assurance of this, he
 hath done all that was necessary to de-
 liver us from the Fear of Death; for
 though we have sinned, yet we have a
 Saviour, that on our sincere Repentance
 and proper Application, has promised
 Forgiveness of our Sin; though we must
 undergo Death, and go down to *Hades*,
 yet our Saviour hath gone thither before,
 and that Place, as well as all others, are
 under

under his Keeping and Jurisdiction. And ^{S E R M.} farther, there shall come a Time, when ^{IV.} *Death and Hades shall give up their Dead*, and shall themselves be destroyed; ^{Rev. xx.} where by *Death and Hades*, we are to ^{13.} understand those evil Angels, that had formerly the entire Power over *Hades*, and who still have the *Tartarian Prison* under their Disposal, yet so as that they themselves are under the Check and Controul of our great Master.

There are two Things which we are taught by Christ's going into *Hades*, the Place of departed Souls, that is, Humility, and Charity, which are much more than one Half of our Duty.

1. We are hereby taught Humility; therefore Christ is said to have *humbled himself*, not only because he died, and that too a very disgraceful Death, but he likewise continued in the State of Death so long, as that his Soul went into the common Receptacles of separate Spirits; all Christ's Humiliation is described by his descending into the lower hidden ^{Eph. iv. 9.} Parts of the Earth. This may denote either *his Mother's Womb* (as *Pf. cxxxix. 15.*) or *the Grave* (*Pf. lxiii. 9.*) or *the Heart of the Earth*, as our Saviour speaks, *Matt. xii. 40.* nay, the lower Parts of the Earth may, in a vulgar Way of speaking, denote *Hades*; not that it is necessary to

suppose,

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IV.

suppose, that the Souls of the Dead are in any Place under Ground, but because this was a common Opinion, or fanciful Tradition, both among the *Jews* and *Heathens*; and the Scriptures often speak in Accommodation to the vulgar Notions. They who go to *Wales*, or *Scotland*; from *London*, or any of these Parts, say they go *down* into *Wales*, or *Scotland*, though I conceive no Man will dispute, but the Mountains of those two Countries are much higher than any Part of *England*, which I say to prove, that the Phrase of *going down* does not necessarily impart the Place gone to to be lower than that from which we set out. The Truth is, our Souls may be said to *go down to the Place of the Dead*, only by way of Resemblance to our Bodies; as they are let down into the Earth, so, in this Respect, as well as many others, the Language we use in Relation to the Body is apply'd to the Soul. So the rich Man in *Tartarus*, wanted a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue, not that the Soul has a Tongue, but that we know not how to speak of the Soul, but by using Words which properly belong to the Body only. However this is certain, that our Saviour's vouchsafing to continue in the State of the Dead, was the lowest Step of his Humiliation.

2. That

2. That he did all this for our sakes, and our real Comfort and Benefit, there can be no doubt; and that therefore here was the lowest Strain of Humility, and the highest of Charity, that ever was. And we cannot in receiving the Communion find a better Exercise for our Minds, than by endeavouring to imitate this noble Pattern which our Saviour hath set us. When therefore we profess our selves Christians, let us remember, that we profess our selves Followers of the most humble *Jesus*, who, from reigning with his Father in the highest Heavens, came down to the lowest Earth; was crucify'd, dead, and buried; and descended into Hell. And when we consider his Humility, don't let us forget his Charity, which consisted in this, that he underwent all this out of Love to our Souls. Let us therefore imitate him in both Particulars at once, by thinking nothing below us, whereby we can be any Ways useful and beneficial to others, especially as to their spiritual Welfare. Let us make our nearest Approaches to God, with all Humility of Soul and Body, and if we come with proud Hearts to the Lord's-Table, we are but the farther off from him. Let us especially come with charitable and loving Hearts: For he that loveth

not

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not his Brother abideth in Death, irretrievable Death and Misery, if he do not repent.

H. I proceed to shew, that, though our Saviour did *descend into Hell, Hades*, the State and Place of deceased Souls, yet he was delivered from it by his Resurrection; or rather by his Resurrection he gave us a Proof, that the *Powers of Death and Hell* were not able to detain him under Custody, any longer than was agreeable to his own Will and Pleasure. As his Soul went into the Regions of Death, so those evil Spirits, who formerly ruled there in chief, had no Power to keep him under this Confinement; but after he had continued there somewhat above 30 Hours, he made Haste to fulfil his Promise of rising again, and to that End did again assume his former Body, and did again associate himself to his Apostles. This is the fundamental Article of our Faith, on which the Belief of the Merits of his Death, and of his future coming to judge the World, do entirely depend. For St. Paul speaks with Demonstration, when he says, *If Christ be not risen, our Preaching is vain, and your Faith is vain, and ye are yet in your Sins.* I shall therefore make it my Business under this Head, to lay before you the great Evidence we have of our Saviour's

1 Cor. xv.

34. 17.

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our's Resurrection. That he was dead, SERM. IV.
and buried, his Enemies will readily attest. The chief Priests and Pharisees were throughly apprized, that our Saviour *had said, while he was yet alive, After three Days I will rise again*; therefore they make Application to *Pilate*, Mat.xxvii. 62---66. that the Sepulchre in which our Saviour was laid, might be made sure, and they had Orders from *Pilate*, to use all possible Precaution, by sealing the Stone, the massy Stone, which was laid on the Mouth of the Sepulchre, and by setting a Watch. They did all that Men could do to prevent any Fraud, or clancular Collusions; and by this they have made the Certainty of our Saviour's Resurrection more sure and uncontestable. Let the *Jews* believe, if they can, that a few Women, and unarmed Men, would dare attempt a Sepulchre which they knew to be guarded with *Roman* Soldiers; or that they could lay them, all at once, asleep, and roll away a weighty Stone from the Sepulchre, and take out their Master's Corps, and convey it away, without waking them, if they had really been asleep; let them believe, that the Disciples came and stole away their Master's Body, while the Soldiers slept; and let them believe it upon the Testimony of these Soldiers, who pretend to know what was done, while,

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S E R M. while, by their own Confession; their
IV. Eyes were closed. Such a Faith, befits
 them well, who, it is very evident, don't
 believe *Moses*, and their own Prophets,
 and whom therefore God has given up,
 to believe a Lie. But we, on the other
 Side, are well assured, that these Soldiers
 themselves did, at first, bear Testimony
 to the Resurrection of Christ, they shew'd
 the chief Priests all that was done, how
 an Earthquake had removed the Stone
 from the Mouth of the Sepulchre, and
 an Angel had appeared and notified the
 Resurrection of Christ. Nor is there any
 Reason to doubt, but that *St. Matthew*
 had living Testimony of this when he
 wrote his Gospel. We are assured, that
 the High Priests, being alarmed with this
 Narrative of the Soldiers, assembled the
 Elders, and took Counsel with them,
 how they might stifle so clear an Evi-
 dence of our Saviour's Resurrection. And
 it is scarce to be doubted, but that *Nico-*
demus, or some other of the Counsellors,
 who were Disciples of Christ, but secret-
 ly, for Fear of the *Jews*, had this Account
 from the chief Priests, if not from the
 Soldiers themselves. And so the Resur-
 rection of Christ was originally attested
 by those who were Infidels, though the
 Mouths of those Witnesses were soon
 stop'd with a Sum of Money. But there
 were

Matt.

xxviii. 2.

Yer. 12.

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were other Witnesses, whose Tongues ^{S E R M} could not be silenced, who could never ^{III.} be terrified with Punishment, nor bribed with Money, or Preferment, to conceal what they had seen, or to deny what they knew to be certain Matter of Fact. See how undauntedly they publish this Truth. For *Peter* is but the Mouth of the whole Body of Apostles, who therefore all joined in the Words pronounced by him, *viz. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses.* And all of them might, no doubt, have said, as two of them, *Peter and John*, do, *We cannot but speak the Things which we have seen and heard.* Now in order to fix the Belief of Christ's Resurrection more firmly in our Hearts, let us consider how well qualified the Apostles were, to attest this Fact, which is of so great Moment, that the Truth of Christianity does, in Effect, rest upon it.

1. And it ought to be considered, that the Apostles were not Witnesses of the common Sort; they were authentick, authoriz'd Witnesses, deputed for this Purpose by God himself; they were indeed intended to attest to the World the whole History of our Saviour, but especially this most remarkable Fact of his rising from the Dead. *St. Peter* expresses this in very lively Words to *Cornelius*. *We are* ^{AA: x.} *Witnesses* ^{39---41;}

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SER. M. *Witnesses of all Things which Jesus did, both in the Land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, and hanged on a Tree; him God raised up the third Day, and shewed him openly, not unto all the People, but unto Witnesses chosen before of God, even to us (the Apostles) who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the Dead. And the same St. Peter tells us, upon the Election of a new Apostle into the room of Judas, viz. that one of those Men, who had accompanied with them all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them, beginning from the Baptism of John, unto that same Day that he was taken up from them into Heaven, was to be a Witness, with the other eleven, of the Resurrection. When the Apostles first received their Commission, they had this eminent Assurance given to them, that whoever did not receive them, and hear their Words, when they departed out of that City, they should shake off the Dust of their Feet [as a Testimony against them]. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorra, in the Day of Judgment, than for that City; so that, in a Word, all Men were bound, at their eternal Peril, to believe the Message concerning Christ and his Gospel, but especially his Resurrection, which*
the

SER. M.
IV.

Acts i. 20.
21.

Matt. x.
44. 15.

the Apostles were sent to publish through the World. They were Witnesses chosen before of God, and all Men were under an Obligation to receive and believe their Testimony. As God, who alone is able to know the Heart, can only chuse such as shall be sincere and uncorrupt in the Testimony; so 'tis God only can give this Authority to any Witnesses, that they who do not believe them, must hereafter suffer for their Infidelity.

2. It deserves our Consideration, that these were the only proper Witnesses, as being best acquainted with our Saviour's Person; for they had daily conversed with him for several Years before. The Truth of our Saviour's Resurrection must, at last, be resolved into this Proposition, *viz.* that *he who breathed upon them, and said Whose Sins ye do remit, &c.* was the same Person, who, a few Days before, was crucified by the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*; that he who shewed *Thomas* the Print of the Nails in his Hands and Feet, was the very same Man, who had, a while before, been crucified between two Thieves; and nothing could qualify Men clearly and beyond Contradiction to determine this Question, but a very familiar Acquaintance, and Knowledge of his Face and Person. The Apostles therefore, by their long and constant

Con-

SERMON
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SER M. Conversation with him, were fit, and, as
IV. I may so say, infallible Judges in this
 Point. This may, at first Sight, seem a
 Thing of small Moment, but he that
 knows any thing of antient or modern
 History, must be sensible, that such Dis-
 putes have been raised concerning the
 Sameness of a Person, as have really
 proved wholly incapable of a Decision.
 We know the unbelieving *Jews* were
 willing to think, that the Man cured
 by our Saviour of his natural Blindness,
 was not the same Man that had before
 sat and begg'd; and 'tis evident the Peo-
 ple were divided in their Opinion. Some
 Joh. ix. 8. said, *This is he; others said, he was only*
 9. *like him.* 'Tis not 140 Years ago since
 a Dispute rose concerning the Person of
 An. 1578. *Sebastian, King of Portugal.* Some as-
 serting, that he was slain in the Battle
 of *Acazar*, and that they had seen, and
 viewed, and buried his dead Corps;
 others firmly believing a Person discover-
 ed afterwards at *Venice* to be that un-
 happy Prince. Nor did it appear possi-
 ble to have the Question thoroughly de-
 termined, by reason of the Uncertainty
 of Men's Judgments in this Point, and
 the vast Numbers of those who pretended
 to know so notable a Person as a King.
 But the certain Death of this real, or
 imaginary Prince, put an End to the po-
 litick

litick Part of the Dispute. If our Savi-^{S E R M.}
our had openly shewed himself to the ^{IV.}
whole Body of the People of *Jerusalem*,
you need not doubt, but his inveterate
Enemies, the chief Priests and Pharisees,
would have sworn, that this was not
the Man that was crucified a while be-
fore; they would have suborned others
to swear the contrary; and there were
Men ready to do it without a Bribe;
for Party and Faction makes Men be-
lieve, or disbelieve, any thing to serve a
present Turn. Since therefore it was of
the utmost Consequence, that the Re-
surrection of Christ should be attested,
and that there should be no room for
Jars or Disputes in a Matter of such in-
finite Consequence, therefore God chose
Witnesses that had the most exact Know-
ledge of Christ's Person, and who were
perfectly unanimous in this, that their
Master was risen from the Dead.

3. The Apostles had sufficient Means
of Information, that it was the very
Person of their Master. *He shewed him-
self alive after his Passion, by many infal-
lible Proofs, being seen of them forty
Days. He did eat and drink with them
after he rose from the Dead. He shew-
ed them his Hands and his Side. And
he challenges them to view and ex-
amine him in the strictest Manner.*

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O

Behold

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S E R M. *Behold my Hands and Feet, that it is I*
 IV. *myself: Handle me and see.* And this is
 Joh. xx. that Evidence upon which St. John does
 20. so much and so justly insist, when, in
 Lu. xxiv. the Front of his first Epistle, he says,
 39. *That which was from the Beginning,*
which we have heard, which we have
seen with our Eyes, which we have look-
ed upon, and our Hands have handled of
the Word of Life: For the Life was ma-
nifested, and we have seen it, and bear
Witness: That which we have seen and
heard, declare we unto you. St. Paul
 was not converted till after our Saviour's
 Ascension; therefore to qualify him for
 the Apostleship, Jesus Christ descends
 1 Cor. xv. from Heaven; so that he could say, *Last*
 8. *of all he was seen of me also.* Many
 others indeed saw him beside the Apo-
 stles; for St. Paul tells us, *He was seen*
 Acts xiii. *many Days of them which came up with*
 31. *him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are*
his Witnesses unto the People: This cer-
 tainly includes the Women who attended
 him from the remotest Part of the holy
 Mat. xxvii. Land to his Passion at Jerusalem, and
 55. most probably the 120 who were present
 at the Election of Matthias. For the
 Acts i. 11. Angel calls them *Galileans*; and all these
 were Witnesses to the People of his Re-
 surrection and Ascension; though they
 were not Witnesses appointed before of
 God,

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God, as the Apostles only were. They ^{S E R M.} could testify that they had seen him, and ^{IV.} so could 400 Brethren beside. The Apo- ^{1 Cor. xv. 6.} stles were intended as the prime and principal Witnesses, these other were, upon Occasion, to second and vouch their Testimony.

4. They were far from being themselves credulous, or over-forward in believing. If the Apostles had been of a Temper ready to give Credit to every Report, or to be convinced without a sufficient Motive, this had very much lessen'd the Strength of their Evidence; but on the other Side it is very clear, that they were very cautious and distrustful. When *Mary Magdalen*, and the other Women, reported to them the Certainty they had of his being risen from the Dead, *their Words seemed to them* ^{Lu. xxiv. 10, 11.} *as idle Tales, and they believed them not.* And even when some of the Apostles had seen him, and worshiped him, *yet others* ^{Matt. xxviii. 17.} *doubted:* And as to *St. Thomas*, he carried the Point further still, and declared, he would not be convinced without the most perfect Demonstration, except he might both see and touch him. And when Men of so jealous and diffident a Disposition did yet at last receive such full and satisfactory Conviction, we may reasonably and safely conclude, that there

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S E R M.
IV. was nothing wanting to make the Proof of his Resurrection amount to the highest Degree of Certainty.

5. Let it be further considered, that the Apostles were plain Men, never convicted of any dark Politicks, or base Artifice. They, upon all Occasions, appeal to them who best knew them, as Witnesses of their plain Dealing and Integrity. St. *Paul*, for Instance, professes to
1 Cor. i. 12. the *Corinthians*, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity he had had his Conversation in the World, and especially toward
1 Th. ii. 10. them. And to the *Thessalonians*, ye are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behav'd our selves among you: And in the Apology he makes for Christianity and himself,
Acts xxiv. he publickly declares, before *Felix* the
16. Governour, and a great Assembly of the *Jews*, who knew his Manner of Life
xxvi. 45. from the Beginning, that he *exercised himself to keep a Conscience void of Offence toward God, and toward Man*. Nor does it appear that the *Jews*, who were his most bitter Enemies, had any Charge against him upon this Head. It is certain the Principles which they embraced, and in which they instructed others, were such as tended to nothing but a very hearty and diligent Pursuit of Virtue, Piety, Veracity, and all commendable Qualities;

Qualities; nor did it appear that their Actions did, in any Respect, contradict their Profession, and therefore not only in Charity, but in strict Judgment we have Reason to believe, that they were Men above all those fordid and detestable Arts of Imposture, which have made *Mahumed* so justly abhorred by all judicious Christians, and which have rendered the *Jesuites*, and other Managers of the Church of *Rome*, so odious in the Eyes of all discerning *Protestants*. And that the Apostles were Persons, upon whose Credit we may rely,

6. Appears further from this, that they had no worldly Interest to serve by what they did and said, in order to establish Men in the Belief of Christ's Gospel. Our Saviour informed them what they were to expect for their Pains, when he first sent them out to preach: *Behold, I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves; but beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues, and ye shall be brought before Governours and Kings for my sake; and the Brother shall deliver up the Brother to Death, and the Father the Child, and the Children shall rise up against the Parents, and cause*

Matt. x.
16, 17.
ver. 21.
them

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S E R M. *them to be put to Death. And ye shall*
 IV. *be hated by all Men for my Names sake.*

Matt. x. And they found, by Experience, that in
 22. this, as well as other Particulars, their Master was a true Prophet; and therefore, if they had proposed to themselves any worldly Ends, they would soon have desisted, when they found themselves so miserably defeated: That they at first indeed expected their Master would be a great, conquering, pompous *Messias*, seems very plain; but when once they saw him crucified, all such Thoughts must vanish; but especially after the *Holy Ghost* descended upon them, and gave them full Instructions in all Points; and from that Time forward, it is very evident, that they were perfectly cured of this worldly, ambitious Temper of Mind, and had no Ends to serve but those of Truth and Virtue.

7. 'Tis a great Confirmation of the Truths delivered by them, that their Testimony agreed together. They are perfectly uniform in the Substance of their Narratives, especially in the great Articles of the Christian Faith, and the Principles of a holy Life. And above all, in the Certainty and Ends of our Saviour's Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Mediation, and of his second coming to judge the World. From preaching these Truths

Truths they could not be discouraged ^{S E R M.}
by the Frowns and Menaces of the great- ^{IV.}
est Men, by the perpetual Apprehensions 
they were under of the most severe Pun-
ishments, and even of Death it self;
from these Resolutions they could not
be prevail'd upon to desist, by the Hopes
of Ease, of Pleasure, or of worldly Lucre.
They all join'd Hand and Heart in de-
crying and condemning the Idolatry of
the Heathen Worship, and the reigning
Sins and Vices of the Ages and Nations
to which they preached; and after some
just Debates, against the Necessity of
Circumcision, and of the *Levitical* Law,
what Jars they had among themselves
were soon reconciled, and the seeming
Difference in some Circumstances is no
more, nor less, than a Demonstration,
that they did not act by Confederacy
and Collusion, as Impostors used to do.
They acted with a uniform Consent in
every thing, where the Faith and Prac-
tice of the Church was nearly concerned.

8. But above all, they preached with
the Demonstration of the Spirit, and with
Power; that is, they proved that they had
a Commission from God, to say and do
what they did, by working many and
great Miracles. *Christ gave them a Mouth* ^{1 Cor. ii. 4.}
and Wisdom, which all their Adversaries
were not able to gain-say nor resist: They

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S E R M. spake with Tongues, which they had never learned, and all Nations heard them, who by their Education were unlearned and ignorant Men, speaking to them in their own Languages. So admirable were the Actions of the Apostles, that
 IV.  never learned, and all Nations heard them, who by their Education were unlearned and ignorant Men, speaking to them in their own Languages. So admirable were the Actions of the Apostles, that
 Acts ii. 43. great Fear came upon all, and many Wonders and Signs were done by the Apostles; and it is particularly observable, that the main Truth, which God intended to confirm by these Miracles, was this that I have been discoursing of; for with great
 Acts iv. 33. Power gave the Apostles Witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; for by proving this they, in Effect, proved all the rest. St. Paul informs us by what Means he himself in particular had been so successful in planting Christianity, viz.
 Rom. xv. 19. by mighty Signs and Wonders, by the Power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ. And St. Mark assures us of all the Apostles, that they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following. By no other Means but this could the Gospel of Christ have found Reception, and settled it self, as it did, in the several and most remote Parts of the known World. The Apostles were, of themselves, far from being Masters

sters of the Art of Perswasion; they had none of the polite and ingenuous Arts and Sciences whereby to recommend themselves and their Cause to the great and wise Men of the World; but by relating some naked Matters of Fact, as the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and by supporting what they said by performing some preter-natural Work, as curing the Sick, Lame, or Blind, or by raising the Dead, they carried their Cause, and converted such as were open to Conviction.

9. And therefore it ought to be considered, that the Testimony of the Apostles is, in Effect, the Testimony of God himself. As Christ said of himself, *The Works which my Father hath given me to do, the same bear Witness of me*; so might the Apostles have said in some Sense. Our Saviour told his Apostles, that *the Works, that is, Miracles, which he did, they should do likewise; yea, and greater Works than these they should do, because I go to the Father*. He clearly hints to them by whose Power they were to do these Miracles, namely, *by the Father's*: For by telling them that he was going to the Father, he intimates, that he went with this Purpose, *viz. to procure for them the Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. Therefore he charges them to tarry *in*

S E R M.
IV.

Joh. v. 36.

xiv. 12.

Lu. xxiv.

49.
Acts i. 4.

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SER. M. in Jerusalem, till they were endued with
 IV. Power from on high, which he calls, *the Promise of the Father*, by which he means the *Holy Ghost*. And it is also
 Mar. xvi. said, that the *Lord*, that is, Jesus Christ, wrought with them, &c. Now putting
 20. all this together, it is very evident, that all three divine Persons did concur in conferring upon the Apostles this Power of working Miracles, and that therefore the Testimony which they gave to divine Truth was, in Effect, the Testimony of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, who did always act with an united Power and Consent in all the divine Works recorded in the New Testament. When our Saviour says, that *they should do greater Works than himself*, he means, they should speak with unknown Tongues, or in Languages which they had never learn'd, which was what our Saviour never appears to have done. Thus God made use of the unlearn'd, poor, unarm'd Apostles, to conquer the Prejudices of the unbelieving *Jews and Gentiles*; 'tis this St. Paul means in those Words: *God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise, the Jewish Rabbies, and the Gentile Philosophers, and the vain Politicians among the Romans and Greeks. God hath chosen the weak Things of the World to confound those that are mighty,*

1 Cor. i.
 27, 28.

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mighty, and base Things of the World, ^{SERM.}
 and Things which are despised, hath God ^{IV.}
 chosen, and Things which are not, to
 bring to nought Things that are. By the ^{2 Cor. xii.}
 Things that are not, he probably means ^{11.}
 himself, whom at another Place he pro-
 nounces to be nothing. And indeed the
 whole Body of Apostles and other Mini-
 sters were, comparatively, nothing; they
 were in no Measure fit Instruments to
 do so great a Work as that of raising the
 Church, of converting Men from the pre-
 vailing Religions of the World, establish-
 ing them in the Belief of a crucify'd
Jesus. The Apostles had no other per-
 sonal Qualifications, which could be ser-
 viceable to this End, but only that they
 were Men of Probity, and not defective
 in common Sense; whatever other Abi-
 lities they had were miraculous and ex-
 traordinary; and therefore they declare,
 that what they did was not done by their
 own Power and Holiness, but they attri- ^{Acts iii.}
 bute all their Success in preaching the ^{12.}
 Gospel to the divine Power and Good-
 ness: *Thanks be unto God, saith St. Paul,*
which always causeth us to triumph in
Christ, and maketh manifest the Savour of ^{2 Cor. ii.}
his Knowledge by us in every Place. ^{14.} This
 is sufficient to shew, that the Testimony,
 which Christ gave to the Resurrection,
 was the Testimony of God; and that
 therefore

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SER. M. therefore we ought as surely to believe
 IV. it, as if a Voice had come from Heaven
 to declare his Resurrection, as there did,
 more than once, to declare him the Son
 of God.

And when we go to shew forth
 Christ's Death to God and Man, let us
 with all remember that we celebrate the
 Death of a Person, who, though he was
 really dead, yet is now alive, and who is
 therefore capable of resenting and pu-
 nishing any Injury or Contempt passed
 upon him, and who certainly will never
 connive at them, who treat him with Dis-
 respect and Irreverence, as they do, who
 receive his Body and Blood with Minds
 and Bodies defiled with any wilful unre-
 pented Sin. This was the Offence of
 which the *Corinthians* were guilty, they
 came to the Sacrament with unpeaceable
 Dispositions, and had Divisions amongst
 themselves, even when they came toge-
 ther to communicate with Christ and one
 another; nay, they came with their Heads
 and Stomachs over-charged with Intem-
 perance, and so they eat this Bread and
 drank this Cup of the Lord unworthily,
 and therefore were guilty of the Body
 and Blood of the Lord. On the other
 side, let Men take equal Heed, that they
 be not guilty of the contrary, Contempt,
 and Neglect, by not receiving it at all;
 for

1 Cor. xi.
 18.

ver. 21.

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for he requires all that call themselves S E R M.
his Disciples to eat this Bread, and drink IV.
this Cup. And say not in your Heart, 
that a Piece of Bread, and a small Draught
of Wine, can never contribute to the
good of your Soul, or to your eternal Be-
nefit; for, in saying this, you are as much
guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord,
as they who receive it without due Pre-
paration and Devotion. Just so they do,
in different Manners, but yet, I think,
in the same Degree, undervalue and slight
the Scriptures, who read them only with
an impious Design to raise Objections
against them, and bring them into Con-
tempt; and they who do never read
them at all, but throw aside the Bible,
as an useless Book. Let all such remem-
ber, that though in the Sacraments we
commemorate the Death of a crucify'd
Jesus, and the Sum and Substance of the
saving Doctrine contained in our Bibles,
is, that Christ died for the Sins of Men;
yet this *Jesus* is *risen again*, and is *set*
down on the Right-hand of the Majesty on
high, and there he is to *sit*, till his *Ene-*
mies are made his Footstool, and that God
has given him all the Ends of the Earth
for his Possession, and that he one Day
will, with an Iron Sceptre, with rigid
Justice, break all these in Pieces, like
Potter's Vessels, who seem by their un-
dutiful

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S E R M. dutiful Carriage toward him, by despising his Word and Sacraments, to outface his Authority, and to defy his Power. I proceed,

IV.

III. To shew the great Importance of this Truth, *viz.* that *God hath raised up Jesus from the Dead.* And we may safely conclude, that when God does, in so very unusual a Manner, interpose to clear any Matter of Fact, when he does so wonderfully exert his Power, or make bare his Arm; when he enables Men to cast out Devils, cure Diseases, raise the Dead, the Occasion must be extraordinary. And it is evident that these Powers given to the Apostles were designed to be a convincing Demonstration to the World, that *Jesus Christ*, in whose Name they preached and did these Miracles,

Acts iii. 15,
16.

was indeed raised from the Grave. Ye have killed the Prince of Life, saith St. Peter to the Jews, whom God hath raised from the Dead, whereof we are witness. And his Name, through Faith in his Name, hath made this Man strong, whom ye see and know. And again he thus addresses himself to the High Priest and

Acts v. 30.

Council: The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a Tree: Him hath God exalted with his Right-hand, to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give Repentance unto Israel, and Forgiveness

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Forgiveness of Sins, and we are his Wit-^{SERM.}
nesses of these Things, and so is also the ^{IV.}
Holy Ghost; which God hath given to them that obey him. And here in my Text, Him hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses; and, as it follows, therefore being by the Right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. By all these Places it appears; that all the Miracles wrought by the Apostles, by Virtue of the Holy Spirit, were indeed intended for a Proof of this capital Article of our Faith, *the Resurrection*. It will therefore be well worth our Time, at this Season, to enquire upon what Grounds this was esteemed so weighty and momentous a Point, that the Apostles (as they were extraordinary Officers in the Church of God) were chosen to be Witnesses chiefly of this Fact, and that all the Miracles they wrought, were designed as Proofs of it. For when the divine Wisdom and Goodness do, as it were, labour to illustrate one single Truth, we may infallibly conclude, that this Truth is of the greatest Consequence, and that very much depends upon our sincere Belief of it. And that we may fully understand the great Moment of this Article, let us consider,

1. That

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SERM.
IV.

1. That it is a great Confirmation of our Faith.

2. A great Motive to Obedience.

3. A powerful Relief under all Affliction.

1. The Belief of Christ's Resurrection is a great Confirmation.

First, Of our Faith in general. *Secondly*, Of our Resurrection of our Bodies in particular.

(1.) He that is assured that Christ did rise from the Dead, has sure Foundation to believe all other Doctrines of our most holy Religion; because, *First*, This is a Proof that he is the *true Messias*, that great Prophet, whom God promised many Ages before to send into the World. For of this Prophet that Prediction of *David* is to be understood, as *St. Peter* observes, *viz.* that *God would not leave his Soul in Hell, nor suffer him to see Corruption*; that is, that his Soul should not long remain in the Place, or State of the Dead; so that his Body should not lie so long in the Grave as to be putrefy'd or corrupted. And the Prophet *Esaïas*, as he does, in a very lively Manner, describe his Death and Sufferings, so he does also his Resurrection. For *he shall*, says *Esaïas*, *be taken from Prison*, the Prison of the Grave, and from Judgment, that is, from that Sentence to die, which *Pilate* unjustly

II. liii. 8.
10.

ly passed on him. *And when he shall* S E R M
IV.
make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and so
 actually die upon the Cross; yet, as it
 there follows, *he shall prolong his Days.*
 From the Resurrection of Christ there-
 fore it plainly follows, that he is that
 eminent Person foretold by *Esaïas*, and
 by Consequence the same that was fore-
 told by *Moses*, who says, *A Prophet shall* A C T S iii.
22, 23.
the Lord your God raise up unto you of your
Brethren, him shall ye hear in all Things
whatsoever he shall say unto you; so that
 if he be that Prophet, for this Reason
 we are to receive all the Doctrine which
 he teaches; and that he is this Prophet,
St. Peter here, and elsewhere, as has been
 observed, proves from his Resurrection,
 Nay, there is utter Excision threatened
 to all who do not submit to him. *For*
it shall come to pass, that every Soul,
which will not hear that Prophet, shall
be cut off from among the People. And
 as therefore Christ's Resurrection proves
 the Person so raised to be the *Messias*, so
 it also proves him to be a Person invested
 with divine Power; and upon this Ac-
 count to be honoured and obeyed by us
 in all Things. For he was declared to
 be the *Son of God with Power, according* R O. i. 4.
to the Spirit of Holiness by the Resurrec-
tion from the Dead. *St. Paul* prays, that
 the *Ephesians* may know the exceeding E P H. i. 18;
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S E R M.
IV. *Greatness of God's Power, according to the mighty working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the Dead.* God, by doing so very miraculous a Work on our Saviour, gave him Glory even in his human Nature. And our Lord himself thus draws his own Titles and Character; *I am the first, and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead: Behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Death, and of Hell.* He clearly challenges to himself divine Honour, and proves that he has a Right to it, by his having conquered the Power of *Hell*, or *Hades*; so that by thus owning *Jesus* for his Son, by raising his Body from the Grave, and causing his Soul to return from the invisible World, the World of Spirits and separated Souls, God has not only proved that we ought to receive him as the *Messias*, and so to hearken to, or obey all that he says, but he has likewise demonstrated him to be a Person armed with a divine Power, and so able to crush all that do obstinately stand out against him, and that therefore we are under very strong Ties and Obligations, to believe in, and submit ourselves to him. But,

Secondly, As the Resurrection of Christ is a very clear Proof of our being bound

to

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to believe all Things which he has re-^{S E R M.}
vealed; so it is an Argument of special ^{IV.}
Force for the Proof of the Resurrection
of our Bodies. Christ had declared, long
before his Death, that *He had Power to* ^{Jo. v. 21;}
quicken whom he will, and that *as the* ^{26.}
Father hath Life in himself, so hath he
given to the Son to have Life in himself,
and he effectually proved this to be true
by his Resurrection; for the Scripture
always makes a necessary Connexion be-
tween the Resurrection of Christ, and of
us. *If Christ be not risen,* says St. Paul, ^{1 Cor. xv.}
then we are found false Witnesses of God, ^{14, 15.}
whom he raised not up, if so be that the ^{2 Cor. iv.}
Dead rise not; and he that raised up the ^{14.}
Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus. ^{Acts xvii.}
Nay, the same Apostle teaches us, that as
God hath appointed a Day, wherein he
will judge the World in Righteousness by
that Man whom he hath ordained, so he
hath given Assurance to all Men, that he
will do this by raising him from the Dead.
And certainly the Resurrection of our
Bodies, and the future Judgment, are
Doctrines of the greatest Weight and Im-
portance; and since the Certainty of
these Doctrines depends on the Resur-
rection of our blessed Saviour, therefore
no Article of our Creed ought to be bet-
tet guarded and secured; for it is evi-
P 2 dent,

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S E R M. dent, that the great Strefs of our Religi-
 IV. on lies upon it.

2. The hearty Belief of this is a great Motive to Obedience. For,

(1.) The Design of the Gospel is to encourage Men to Obedience for the future, by assuring us, that upon Repentance our former Sins shall be blotted out; and this Promise is secured to us by Christ's rising from the Dead: for as he
 Ro. iv. 25. *was delivered for our Sins, so he rose again for our Justification.* For Jesus Christ was our Surety, he undertook for us, and when he therefore was discharged from Custody, when his Soul was released from the State of the Dead, and his Body dismiss'd from the Sepulchre, where it was confin'd, then Mankind had an effectual Assurance given them, that what he had done, and suffered for us, was accepted by God; and that all Penitents, who believed in him, need no other Remedy against their Guilt, but his Blood duly apply'd. And certainly, therefore, the greatest Motive to Amendment is the Resurrection of Christ, whereby we are certify'd, that if we repent and amend, though our Sins were as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow.

(2.) Farther, our Saviour's Resurrection is a strong Motive to Obedience, if it
 be

be considered, that Christ by this Means S E R M. IV.
hath acquired a Dominion over us, a more perfect Right to govern and command us. This is an Argument of St. Paul's forming, for he tells us, that *to this End* Ro. xiv. 9.
Christ both died and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the Dead and the Living. And certainly, if he be our Lord, we are in common Justice bound to pay him the Service which he requires; therefore he tells us at another Place, that *they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them,* 2 Cor. v. 15.
and rose again. And this Consideration will be of more Force still, if it be remembered, that this Dominion, which Christ hath by his Resurrection gain'd over us, is an everlasting Dominion, it does not die with us; for you have heard that he is Lord of the Dead; he has the Keys of Death, and even when *Hades* gives up her Dead, they are still under his Authority and Jurisdiction. And he hath commanded us, saith St. Peter, to *preach to the People, and to testify, that it is he who is ordained of God to be Judge of the Quick and Dead* Acts x. 42. And if any thing can teach us to bear a just Regard to his Gospel, and to make his Precepts the Rule of our Life and Actions, it is this, that he who gave them to us, he by whose Authority they were enacted, will

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S E R M. hereafter sit as Judge of us, and of all
 IV. Mankind, and that he is a Judge who
 has eternal Life and Death at his Dispo-
 Ro. ii. 16. sal. For, says St. Paul, God will judge
*Men by Jesus Christ according to my Gos-
 pel. For the Father judgeth no Man in*
 Jo. v. 22. his own Person, but *hath committed all*
Judgment to the Son. For tho' the Father
 and Son be clearly two distinct Persons,
 yet the Power, and Wisdom, Authority,
 and judicial Sovereignty of the Father is
 in the Son: He is, or has the Wisdom
 1 Cor. i. 24. and Power of God. And it is in this Re-
 spect that Christ says, *I and the Father*
are one, John x. 30. because the Deity of
 both is one and the same, originally in
 the Father, and by Communication in
 the Son; so that he who knoweth the
 Son, knoweth all that is to be known of
 the Father, and he who seeth the Son,
 seeth all that is to be seen of the Father.
 And therefore they who are judged by
 the Son, are judged by the Father. And
 the Consequence of this is, that we should
 Jo. xiv. 9. *honour the Son, even as we honour the*
Father, and obey the Son, as we obey
 the Father.

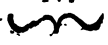
3. The Resurrection of Christ is a
 powerful Remedy against all Trouble
 and Affliction, when thoroughly believed
 and apply'd. And that,

(1.) To

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(1.) To his Church in general. For ^{S E R M. IV.} we have a living Head. *I am alive*, says he, *for evermore*; and he has not only ^{Rev. i. 18,} *Life in himself*, but *he quickeneth whom he will*; the Church therefore can never want a Guide, a Protector, and a Patron. He has promised that the *Gates of Hades*, ^{Matt. xvi. 18.} or Destruction, *shall never prevail against* his Church, and it is impossible that he should ever forget, or break his Word plighted to his Spouse, as he every where calls his Church. Some one Limb, or Branch of it may be lop'd off; and History gives us many sad Instances of several National Churches that have had their Candlestick removed, their Light extinguished, but Christ will always have a Body of true Pastors, and People, that shall *worship God in Spirit and Truth*, in which the Word shall be rightly preached, and the Sacraments duly administred. For he hath obliged himself to be with the Apostles, and their Successors, even to the End of the World. And it is he who by his Presence in our Assemblies, enlivens all the Members of his Church, and gives Efficacy to our Ordinances. He is not indeed bodily present with his Church, as the Papists believe; but he is with us by his Spirit, the Comforter, who was for ever promis'd to remain with us. Therefore the Church is the new and li-

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S E R M. ^{IV.}  ving Way which he hath consecrated for us through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh; this is the Way whereby we are to enter into the Holy of Holies, that is, Heaven.

Heb. vii.
25.

(2.) Nay, the Resurrection of Christ is Matter of solid Comfort to all private Christians, who endeavour to live in a Conformity to his Gospel. For *Christ being raised from the Dead, dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him.* And every Christian therefore knows of a Mediator he has, or may have with God, who is able to save to the utmost those who come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for us. We have the Privilege of being under the Care and Tuition of a living *Messias* and Saviour. 'Tis, methinks, but cold Comfort to the *Mahumedans* to go a long Pilgrimage, as they do, once a Year, to visit the Tomb of a dead Prophet, or rather a damn'd Impostor. And on the other Side, it is the very Life and Soul of our Religion, that our Redeemer is one that has overcome Death, and is in a Capacity to do every thing for us, that we can in Reason desire at his Hands. Our Saviour is, in several Places of Scripture, represented as a Rock, or Stone, or chief Corner-Stone; because the Hopes of his People must be built or founded upon

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upon him; 'tis on him, and his Promises, ^{S E R M.}
 that we must rely; but now St. Peter ^{IV.}
 bids us come to him as unto a *living* ^{1 Pet. ii. 4.}
Stone. This may, at first Sight, seem a
 very harsh Expression, yet the famous
 Poet *Pindar* gives the very same Epithet ^{Zōais}
 to certain large Rocks in the Sea, which ^{Πίργας}
 were believed to roll and move, and not ^{Pyt. Δ.}
 to be so fix'd as others are. St. *Peter*
 calls our Saviour a *living Stone*, lest any
 should apprehend him to be like the
 Idols which the Heathens worship'd,
 made of a senseless Tree, or Marble. He
 gives them therefore by this to under-
 stand, that they were not to conceive
Christ Jesus, because he is represented
 under the Emblem of a Stone, to be void
 of Sense and Life. And we, by being
 built upon him, are to become lively
 Stones, as it there follows, that is, we
 must be cemented into his Church, which
 is the spiritual Building there mentioned.
 We must belong to that holy Priesthood,
 that we may offer spiritual Sacrifices ac-
 ceptable to God through *Christ Jesus*:
 the Sum of what he says is this, that we
 must be united to Christ as to the chief
 Corner-Stone, and to one another as
 Parts of the same Building the Church,
 and by this Means we may be well as-
 sured of having our Devotions, and all
 our honest Performances, rendered well
 pleasing.

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S E R M.
IV.  pleasing to God, and may depend upon it, that our Services shall be favourably accepted; and this is certainly one of the greatest Comforts that a Christian can have in this Life: Therefore, says St. Gal. ii. 20. *Paul, I am crucify'd with Christ, and nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* He was crucify'd with Christ, by dying unto Sin, he was alive by means of all those excellent and glorious Actions, by which he did Honour to God and Christ's Gospel, and was a Master-Builder of his Church. Yet, says he, it is not I that live, that perform such notable Services to my God and Redeemer, but 'tis Christ that lives in me, 'tis he, who being raised from the Dead, and having all Power given to him, both in Heaven and Earth, does by his holy Spirit supply me with inward Strength and Vigor, and refreshes my Soul with continual Streams of inward Joy and Comfort.

There is nothing that is more apt to cast a Damp upon the Spirits of Men, than the Thoughts of Death, and the Thoughts of it would be more damping still to all generous Minds, if they had any Suspicion, that Death did wholly put an End to our Being; therefore the Immortality of the Soul was that with which the Heathen and the best of the Philosophers

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losophers endeavoured to cheer their S E R M. IV.
Minds : But now we have no Reason to
believe, that this is of it self sufficient to
give true and solid Satisfaction to us. For
it is certain, that the Soul without the
Body is not the perfect and entire Man ;
and by Consequence that we cannot be
made truly happy, till we are truly Men,
which will not be till the Resurrection-
Day. In the mean Time our Souls shall
be safe from the Fury and Malice of evil
Spirits, they shall be preserved and de-
fended from all the Assaults of the Powers
of Darknes, by him that is Lord both of
the Dead and the Living ; nay, they shall
receive inward Comfort from the Ex-
pectation of the future Appearance of
Christ in Glory ; they shall have as much
Enjoyment, as Souls separated from the
Body are capable of. But I need not tell
you, that the Immortality of the Soul
will afford us by a lower Degree of Hap-
piness, because there is no Reason to be-
lieve, that we shall, before the Day of
Judgment, be admitted into the Regions
of Glory, into the immediate Presence of
God and Christ, into that Kingdom,
which God prepared for his elect Angels,
and for good Men before the World be-
gan. And since the Resurrection of *Christ
Jesus* is that which alone can assure us of
our own rising again, therefore this is
the

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SERM. the only true Basis of Comfort, on which
IV. the Soul of a Christian can repose it self.

Col. iii. 4. *When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory; we are therefore not to expect true and perfect Life, till this last Appearance of our blessed Lord. I cannot but observe to you, how St. Paul teaches Timothy, as a Minister of Christ Jesus, to apply this Doctrine to himself. For having charged him to commit the Instructions he had received from him to faithful Men, who might be able to teach to others; he exhorts him to endure Hardness as a good Soldier of Christ Jesus, (Ver. 3.) to be a Fellow-Sufferer with him. For the Life of all true Ministers of Christ is a military Life, they must always expect to be struggling with one Difficulty or another: This was prefigured in the Tribe of Levi, for when any of them were thirty Years of Age, they are said to enter into the Host, or Army (Ainsw.) that is, then they were to begin to officiate. Therefore all from thirty to fifty, are said to enter in to perform the Service. (לצבא Heb. to war the Warfare, as it is in the Margin of our large Bibles) from hence St. Paul took this Way of Expression; and he goes on to tell Timothy, that no Man that warreth, [to God] entangleth himself with the Affairs*

2 Tim. ii.
2—8.

συγκακο-
παθησον.

Num. iv. 3.

2 Tim. ii. 4.

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fairs of this Life, that he please him, who hath chosen him to be a Soldier, And if a Man strive for Masteries in any of the famous Olympic, or other Grecian Games, he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully, that is, unless he observe the Rules prescribed by those who have the Government and Inspection of these Matters: And then to encourage him to use his best Endeavours to this End, he adds, the Husbandman that laboureth, must be first Partaker of the Fruits. Here he evidently compares the Life and Employ of a Minister to that of a Husbandman, as he does also at other Places, as where he says, *I planted, and Apollos water'd,* and he seems to suppose, that they who do faithfully acquit themselves in this Militia and Agriculture, shall have some Preference given them at the Day of Recompence; they shall first be Partakers of the Fruits. But then to make the greater Impression upon Timothy's Thoughts, and give it the greater Weight, *Remember, says he, that Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David, was raised from the Dead, according to my Gospel;* for he considered the Resurrection of Christ, when truly believed, to be the most effectual Principle of Obedience, and of doing and suffering the Will of God; and therefore, the Apostle having reminded

2 Tim. ii. 8.

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IV.

2 Tim. ii.
11, 12.

1 Th. iv.
12—18.

minded him in the two next Verses of his own Imprisonment for the sake of Christ, and of his Affection for the Church of Christ, whom he calls the elect, he tells him further, *It is a faithful Saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him, if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* And nothing could be said more to the Purpose, whereby to comfort *Timothy* under all the Difficulties that daily started up before him in the faithful Exercise of his Office, to persuade him to be ready to die in so good a Cause, than to remind him of the Resurrection of Christ, as being a Pledge of our own. And when the same *St. Paul* would incite the *Thessalonians* to lack nothing, or to be defective in no Point of Duty, and *not to be sorry* for their deceased Friends, like them, the Heathen, that had no Hope, he gives this Reason for both: *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus God will bring with him.* And he goes on; *For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent, or be before-hand with, them which are asleep. For the Lord (Jesus) himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and*

and with the Trump of God, and the Dead ^{S E R M.}
in Christ shall rise first. Then we which ^{IV.}
are alive, and remain, shall be caught up
together with him in the Clouds, to meet
the Lord in the Air, and so shall we ever
be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one
another with these Words. And by all
this, I presume, it sufficiently appears,
that the Resurrection of Christ is the on-
ly sure Bottom on which we can lay an
Assurance of our own future Rising to a
State of immortal, endless Happiness, and
by Consequence of all the Encourage-
ment we have to labour in our Duty,
and of all that Comfort we can conceive
of our own, or our Friends Welfare in
the World to come.

From hence we may learn, how to com-
memorate our Saviour's Resurrection, *viz.*

1. As a Time, wherein it is proper to
stir up, and refresh our Faith in the
Messias. The Day of Christ's Resurrec-
tion is as it were his Coronation Day,
when he first entred upon the Exercise
of his kingly Office. St. Paul applies
these Words of the second Psalm, *Thou* ^{Acts xiii.}
art my Son, this Day have I begotten ^{33.}
thee, to our Saviour's Rising from the
Dead. It seems to be meant primarily
of *David's* being crown'd King, when
he was possess'd of Mount *Sion*; for the
Day of Princes Accession to the Throne
may

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may not be unfitly term'd their Birth-Day, the *Natalitia Imperii*; and this Promise was ultimately, and in a more proper Sense fulfilled in our Saviour, who was by his Resurrection, as has been shewed, declared to be the Son of God with Power, when he miraculously came out of the Womb of the Grave, if I may so say, and was exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to the *Israel* of God, even to as many as shall believe on his Name. As therefore at all Times, so now especially, when we commemorate so very extraordinary a Providence, we ought to *kiss the Son*. Kissing was, and is to this very Day, in this Kingdom of ours, a Rite, and Ceremony, whereby Subjects pay their Homage to their Sovereign. And, if therefore we do own Christ for our King, if we look on him as a Person that deserves to be honoured by us, if we desire to be esteemed his faithful and true liege People, let us by our Thoughts, by our Words, and Actions, declare so much to him, and to the World. Let us sing Hymns of Praise and Glory to him that was dead, and is alive, and lives evermore, and who has the Keys of Death, and of Hell.

2. Let us consider him not only as our Lord, but as our Judge, who has given us a Specimen of his divine Power in raising

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raising the Dead, by building up the Temple of his Body, after it had been dissolved three Days, and has therefore shewed, that he is a quickening, Life-giving Spirit. He that has made good his Word in reviving himself, will also in his good Time give sufficient Proof, that he can raise us too: And therefore we do to little purpose remember Christ's Resurrection, if we forget the Resurrection of ourselves, and of all Mankind.

3. We should keep this Feast unto the Lord, by bringing all our Thoughts, and Tongues, and our whole selves, into an entire Subjection and Obedience to this our King and Sovereign. By his Rising again, he is, even in his human Nature, advanced to a royal Dignity, and 'tis to little purpose to pay him an outward Fealty, if at the same Time our Hearts do still remain rebellious. We do but act the Part of *Pilate's* Soldiers, who bow'd the Knee before him, and said, *Hail King of the Jews*: They do no more, who call Christ *Lord, Lord, but do not the Things that he would*. If we will indeed give a Demonstration of our Loyalty to this our King and Saviour, we must make our most stubborn Lusts submit to his Authority, and make their stiff Necks bow down under his gentle Yoke; they who call themselves Christians,

S E R M.
IV.

Mat. xxviii.
29.

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stians,

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IV.

istians, and perform an outward Homage to him, but remain inwardly Enemies to him by their wicked Works, they do but follow the Example of *Judas*, who betray'd him with a Kiss.

4. And they who have indeed reduced their corrupt Hearts to a sincere Obedience to him, and his most holy Laws, they take the most proper Course to render the Resurrection of Christ truly comfortable and reviving to them. To such as these, who fear God's Name, this *Sun of Righteousness is risen, with Healing in his Wings*. He imparts a kindly, cheering Warmth, like that of the Sun to young Plants, like that of the Eagle to her Brood. Christ, by rising again, is become our Life. God hath raised all good

Eph. ii. 6. Christians, and made them *sit together in heavenly Places, in Christ Jesus*. By the *τὰ ἐπουράνια*, I should rather understand the heavenly Ordinances, or Institutions of the Gospel, of which the Church is possess'd, and which, by the Resurrection of Christ, are render'd full of Comfort and Efficacy, and therefore at another Place we are told, that he hath *bled us with all spiritual Blessing in heavenly Places*, or rather, in the holy Institutions which he hath founded; and which derive all their Virtue and Power from his Resurrection, and what was consequent upon

Of the Resurrection of CHRIST. 239

upon it, his Ascension, and Intercession. S. E. R. M.
IV.
at God's Right-Hand. And to them, who make a right Use and Application of these Pledges of his Law and Favour, they are indeed an Earnest and Assurance of greater Blessings in reserve at the great Day of Retribution, when Signs and Sacraments shall be turn'd into Substance and Reality, and Promises into Performance and Enjoyment; when we shall no longer see through a Glass darkly, but Face to Face. And a firm Belief of this will support us in the mean Time, and make all the Sufferings and Calamities of this Life, in some measure tolerable to us; while, on the other Side, they who only make an outward Show of believing and obeying a crucify'd *Jesus*, and do not indeed consider it as a certain Proof of a future Judgment, but rather live as if they believed none; to them, I say, who do not so believe the Resurrection as to reverence and obey him that God hath thus *raised up to be our Prince and Saviour*, neither this, nor any Thing else that Christ did, can ever afford any real Comfort or Satisfaction. Even the Resurrection of Christ himself, to such as these, promises nothing but eternal Death and Confusion; and that which to sincere Christians administers
such

240 *Of the Resurrection of CHRIST.*

SERM. such a Hope, as carries them within the
IV. Vail; to Mockers, and Hypocrites, and
such as will not have Christ to reign
over them, is a certain Proof and Presage
of eternal Misery and Despair.



S E R-

SERMON V.

Of God's Extraordinary Grace toward St. Paul.

I T I M. I. 14.

*And the Grace of God was exceeding
abundant toward me, with Faith, and
Love which is in Christ Jesus.*

FROM these Words I shall take Oc-^{S E R M.}
casion to shew at large, the very ex-^{V.}
traordinary Grace toward the Person that
wrote them, the glorious Apostle *Paul*.
And to this End, I shall

I. Consider him as he was before his
Conversion, a *Jewish* Infidel, a Persecutor
of *Christians*.

II. I shall consider the Manner of his
Conversion.

III. I shall consider him as actually
Converted.

Q

1. Before

S E R M. I. Before his Conversion he was a Jew,
 V. *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*, as he himself
 expresses it, *Pb. iii. 5.* that is, not a Pro-
 selyte, but born of *Jewish* Parents, tho' in
 a *Heathen* City, viz. *Tarsus* in *Cilicia*, but
 removed while he was young to *Jerusa-*
lem, and there was brought up under the
 Tuition of *Gamaliel*, a famous *Rabbi*, by
 whom he was instructed according to the
 most perfect way of the Law of the Fa-
 thers, as he testifies of himself, *Acts*
xxii. 3. which deserves our particular
 Observation, because by this means he
 must be well vers'd in the antient Prophe-
 cies concerning the *Messia*.

We know nothing of the Quality or
 Condition of his Parents : nor are we cer-
 tainly to conclude that they were of the
 inferior sort, because their Son was bred
 a Tent-Maker ; for the *Jews* tell us, that
 it was a Maxim among their *Rabbies*, that
 every one should be bred to some honest
 Handicraft, or Trade, that so if they were
 reduced to Poverty, they might be able to
 maintain themselves by their own La-
 bour, and be under no Temptation to
 Theft, or any other wicked Arts. It seems
 probable that his Father had done some
 singular Service for some of the *Roman*
Emperours ; for his Son *Saul* was born
 free of the City of *Rome*, tho' the Place
 of his Birth was *Tarsus* a City of *Cilicia* :
 for



for this was a Privilege that *Emperors* used to grant to them who had deserved well at their Hands in any of the Provinces, that they and their Children should enjoy all the Privileges of *Roman Citizens*. But if his Ancestors had been never so honourable, yet we could scarce expect, that the Apostle should have informed us of it, because he seems to have been one that made light of all the shining Glories of the World.

2. He was Old enough to have heard *Christ Jesus* preach, and to be Eye-witness of his Miracles, and by this means to have had personal Demonstration of his being the *Messia*, while he was here on Earth : but there is no Probability that he ever did it. He was carried away with the common Prejudices of the *Jews* of that Age, and would not so much as give our Saviour a fair hearing : At the Time of *St. Stephen's* Martyrdom he was of Age to have chosen his Party, that is, an Anti-Christian Pharisee, and he declares that he *was consenting to his Death, and kept the Raiment of them that slew him, Acts xxii. 20.* He was not content to be an Infidel of the common Size, but became a fierce Persecutor of *Christians*. In this he acted contrary to the Principles of his own Master, the moderate *Gamaliel*, whose Advice it was, that they should refrain

Q 2

their

S E R M. ^{V.} their Hands from those Men, meaning the Apostles. He was hurried on by the Heat of his Temper, and his Zeal for *Moses's* Law, and the Temple Worship.

He was exceedingly mad against all that called on *Christ's* Name; for he spared neither Sex, nor Age, nor stuck at any Punishment, that it was possible for him to have inflicted on them.

3. And this he did, notwithstanding those Pleas and Apologies, at which he could not but frequently be present: As he heard the Speech which *St. Stephen* made at his Death, so there can be no Question but that when he brought other *Christians* before the high Priests and other Men of Authority, being present at their Trials, he very well knew what Defences and Vindications they made, both of their Religion, and of themselves. And we are told in after Ages of several Officers that were converted to Christianity by the Speeches, which Martyrs and Confessors made, when they were brought before the Rulers of the World: yet nothing that was said by those great Number of *Christians*, at whose Trial he assisted, could at all make Impression upon the Mind of a hardened *Saul*. Yet we have no just Reason to question his Sincerity: for he himself assures us, that he did it ignorantly in Unbelief, in
the

the Words immediately before my Text: S E R M.
 and upon another Occasion, *Acts xxiii. 1.* V.
 before the High-Priest and Sanedrim, *I*
have lived in all good Conscience before
God unto this Day : And tho' he was a *Pha-*
risee, yet it is unreasonable to suppose, that
 there were no single Men among them free
 from the Hypocrisy with which our Savi-
 our so frequently, and severely, charges
 the main Body of that Sect. We may be-
 lieve him when he tells us, that as touch-
 ing the Law he was Blameless. He is a
 sad Example how a Man may be sincere
 even in his Infidelity, and even while he
 lives amidst all the means of Informati-
 on; nay, he is a standing Proof that a Man
 may be sincere, even in persecuting the
 Professors of Christianity, and even in be-
 ing a leading Man in this most barbarous
 and inhuman Practice, for we are assured,
 he had a commission from the High-Priest,
 to go to *Damascus*, and bring those whom
 he there found of the Christian Religion
 to *Jerusalem*, after he had put them in
 Chains; and this is no more than what
 our Saviour told his Disciples, that *the*
time would come, when they who slew them
should think, that they did God good Ser-
vice. And this was certainly the Case of
Saul, as he has himself left it upon Re-
 cord in his Speech before King *Agrippa*,
Acts xxvi. 9. I verily thought with my
self,

S E R M. *self, that I ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.*
 V. *10. Which Thing I also did in Jerusalem ;*

--- and when they were put to Death, I gave my Voice against them. But sure no Christian will from hence conclude, that Saul, and the rest of them who were in his Condition, were safe, or accepted with God : Nay, but, on the other Side, this alone is a sufficient Proof, that Sincerity alone is not sufficient to entitle Men to the Favour of God.

Thus we see a sad Character of a Man educated in the best Way that then was possible, and profiting in the Knowledge of the then only true Religion ; that was, above many that were his Equals in Age, *Gal. i. 14.* full of Zeal for God, and his Glory, and especially for the *Levitical Law*, exemplary in his Life and Conversation ; and yet, thro' a Fondness for the Traditions of the Fathers, and by the prevailing Prejudices of his Friends and Acquaintance, absolutely averse to *Christianity*, and deaf to all that was said in Vindication of it ; and not only so, *but breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter* against all *Christians*, thirsting after their Blood, persecuting them with all possible Violence, and ready to execute not only his own, but other Mens Spite against them. It is now Time to see the Reverse of him, and therefore,

II. To

II. To consider the Manner of his ^{ERM} Conversion. You all know the Story; I shall only observe to you the following ^{V.} Particulars,

1. *Jesus Christ* descended from Heaven on Purpose to stop this Persecutor in the Heat of his Fury, while he was going arm'd with a Commission from the High-Priest, to fetch such Christians as he should find there, bound to *Jerusalem*. This was a Favour vouchsafed to none of the Apostles but to *St. Paul* only, that he saw *Christ*, after his Ascension into Heaven. Three Times at least, after this, he had a View of him, but whether he ever saw him in Person after this, is not so certain. At *Corinth* the Lord spake to him by Night in a Vision, *Acts* xviii. 9. when he pray'd in the Temple, and fell into a Trance, he saw the Lord, *Acts* xxii. 17. At another Time, when he was at *Jerusalem*, in the Night the Lord stood by him, and said, *Be of good Cheer, &c. Acts* xxii. 11. And we can scarce doubt but when he was caught up into the Third Heaven, he had also another Sight of *Christ Jesus*. But we cannot be sure that this was not the same with some one of those before mention'd: However, it is certain, that he did personally see him, and by this was qualify'd to be an Apostle:

SERM.

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For one Part of the Apostolical Office was to be a Witness of the Resurrection, and he therefore had been utterly disabled for that Office, in this Respect, if our Saviour had not vouchsafed to appear to him in the Manner that he did; not only after he was raised from the Dead, but after he was ascended into Heaven. And if the other Apostles had the Advantage of St. *Paul* in conversing with *Christ* before and after his Death and Resurrection; yet this was the peculiar Privilege of St. *Paul*, that he saw and heard *Christ* speaking to him after his Ascension into Heaven. As the other Apostles were call'd to their Office by *Jesus Christ* in Person, so must St. *Paul* too; and so he was, but with this Difference, they were call'd by *Jesus Christ* in his State of Humiliation, while he was a suffering Messiah, St. *Matthias* only by a secret Direction of the Lots which were cast on this Occasion, but St. *Paul* was call'd, not only by the immediate Voice of *Jesus*, as the first Twelve were, but with the Voice of a glorify'd *Jesus*, after he had taken actual Possession of his Heavenly Kingdom: And St. *Paul* proves his Commission from this Argument, 1 Cor. ix. 1. *Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* And again, xv. 8. having reckon'd up all the Appearances made by *Christ* after his

his being raised from the Dead, he concludes his Narrative by observing that *he was seen of all the Apostles, (verse 7.) and last of all, says he, he was seen by me also, as one born out of due Time.* He compares himself to an abortive, untimely Birth; because such Births are sudden and unexpected, and because Children so born, if they do live, yet, for the present at least, are exceeding weakly, and feeble; and tho' his Conversion did very truly resemble such a Birth, in the Suddenness of it, yet St. Paul rather chuses to insist on the other Part of the Resemblance: for in the next Words he tells us, *he was the least of the Apostles, that scarce deserv'd the Name of an Apostle,* as an imperfect, abortive Birth is scarce worthy of the Name of a Child. There was at Rome, after the Death of Julius Caesar, many chosen to be Senators by meer Grace and Favour, or for worse Reasons, and these were call'd abortive Senators. Some suppose, that the Apostle calls himself here an Abortive, in Allusion to this Passage of the Roman History.

2. As it is clear, that *Jesus Christ* descended from Heaven with a Light beyond the Brightness of the Sun; so it seems most probable, that the Light was accompany'd with Thunder: This I take to be the Meaning of that Expression, *Acts ix. 7.*

The

^S ERM. *The Men which journey'd with him heard a Voice.* St. Paul himself assures us, that *these Men did not bear the Voice of Jesus speaking to him, Acts xxii. 9.* And the Greek Word Φωνή, which commonly signifies a Voice, does also frequently signify Thunder, particularly *Exod. ix. 23.* And divine Appearances are (I conceive) generally attended with Thunder, as well as Lightning; not only the most observable divine Appearance at Mount Sinai was thus solemnized, but that describ'd by David, *Pf. xviii.* where it is said, *Ver. 9. God bowed the Heavens, and came down, and ver. 13, 14. The Lord also thunder'd out of Heaven, and the Highest gave his Voice; -- He sent out his Arrows, he shot out Lightenings.* Habakkuk's Description is to the same Purpose, only he begins with the Thunder, which he calls the *Speech of God, Chap. iii. 2.* and then he goes on, *Ver. 3. The Lord came from Teman, (the South) his Brightness was as the Light, and he had Horns (bright Rays) coming out of his Hands.* And you have the like Description, *Pf. xcvi.* and in other Places.

And this does not only shew the Consistency of these Two Texts, but gives us a just Idea of this great Work, I mean the Conversion of *Saul of Tarsus.* When Christ himself descended from Heaven surrounded

surrounded with Glory, and with the known Emblems of the divine Presence, we may be sure that this was done to serve some very great End, for some most excellent Purpose, and certainly such was the Conversion of this Persecutor.

3. We may observe that he was a present Sufferer by this special Favour done him by Christ Jesus. With this sudden Stroke, not only *Saul*, but his Companions all fell down to the Earth, Acts xxvi. 14. they were not only affrighted, but stood speechless, which seems to be a Confirmation of what I before said, that the Voice, as it is called in our Translation, was in truth, a Clap of Thunder. *Saul* himself was taken Blind, which inclines us to think, that the extraordinary Brightness was indeed a glaring Flash of Lightening. And it is evident that his Eyes were scorch'd by it, which caused somewhat like Scales to fall from them upon their being cured : for after he had continued in this Condition for three Days, and three Nights, our Saviour sent *Ananias* to recover his Sight by a Miracle. And it is probable that his Abstinence from Meat, and Drink for so long a time did not proceed from Choice, or Devotion, but from the violent Consternation, and Discomposure of his Blood, and Spirits, occasioned by this shocking Stroke of Thunder, and the

SERM. the other Miraculous Phenomena with
 V. which it was attended.



4. But before he was thus fallen to the ground he saw the Person of the Divine *Jesus*, he beheld our Lord with his bodily Eyes, before the Lightning had perfectly deprived him of his Sight, and distinctly heard his Voice speaking to him, and asking a Question, to which it was impossible for him to give a direct Answer, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* It was in vain for him to say, Lord, I do not persecute thee: for *Jesus Christ* resents any Injury done to his Disciples, as if it had been done to himself. But *Saul* instead of Answering our Lord's Question, asks him another, *Who art thou Lord?* From this it is plain, that *Saul* was a perfect stranger to *Christ*, and had probably never seen his Face before, tho' he had lived at *Jerusalem*, while our Saviour preached openly in the Temple and Synagogues, while he did his Miracles there, and was at last tried, condemned, and crucified, at that Place; yet *Saul* one would think had industriously avoided the Sight of him, and these first Approaches cost him very dear. But the Blindness of his Eyes helped to clear up the Sight of his Mind; his present Trembling, Horror, and Astonishment, gave him an unshaken Courage and settled Firmness of Judgment for ever after.

Lord,

Lord, says he, *what wilt thou have me to do?* In which is implied a Resolution of submitting to his Commands, of complying with his Will, and following his Directions.

5. He was not disobedient to the Heavenly Call, Acts xxvi. 10. And I conceive it was not possible for humane Nature to withstand so powerful a Conviction. Saul did not take one step toward his own Conversion, till he had by an invincible force been interrupted in his Road to *Damascus*, in the Career of his persecuting Zeal: Now at last he submitted to *Christ*, when Obstinacy itself could no longer resist the Violence of the Demonstration.

6. They who travelled with him, and were his Associates not only in the Journey, but in the persecuting of *Christians*, persisted in their former Infidelity: for tho' they saw the Lightening, and heard the Thunder, yet they neither saw *Jesus Christ*, nor heard his Voice, when he spake to *Saul*. Acts xxvi. 13. ix. 7. Thus God had Mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and whom he would he hardened; thus God made a Distinction between *Saul* and his Comrades, as he had formerly done between *Jacob* and *Esau*: and here was a clear Instance, that it is not always of him that willeth, or him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy, *Saul* and

SERM. and his Associates were all equally running against *Christ* and his Gospel: *Jesus Christ* was pleased to stop *Saul*, and rebuke the Madness, and convince him of the Errour of his Way, in such a Manner as he never used toward any other Person from the beginning of the World; and this was the chief Instance of that exceeding abundant Grace of God toward him, which he so justly magnifies and celebrates here in my Text.

7. If this seeming Partiality of God seem strange to any Man, let him consider the End that *Christ* had in view, when he used this very singular Method in converting *St. Paul*, and we shall find that *Christ* did not take this Course, so much out of Fondness to *St. Paul's* Person, as out of regard to the Advancement of the Gospel, and the benefit of Mankind, but especially of those Countries and People to whom he was to be sent. This is sufficiently evident from the Words which *Christ* spake to him on this Occasion, *Acts xxvi. 16. I have appeared unto thee for this very purpose, to make thee a Minister and Witness both of these Things which thou hast seen, and of those Things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the People and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to turn them from Darkness to Light.* And this will further appear

pear from the Words of *Christ* to *Ananias*, which were intended as an Objection against his going to *Saul*, viz. in Sum, that he was a flagrant Persecutor, and that therefore no good was to be done upon him: for *Christ's* Answer upon this Occasion was, *Go thy way; for he is a chosen Vessel to me*; and the next Words tell you to what he was chosen, namely, *to bear Christ's Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and Children of Israel*. From all this it appears that the main View, which our Saviour had in calling *Saul* after this singular Manner, was not so much intended for his own personal Good, as for the publick Benefit of others; and that he was Elected, and Chosen, not to be a private Believer and Heir of Salvation, but an Apostle, and Minister, for the Conversion of others to the *Christian* Religion, and a strenuous Defender of the Faith in opposition to all the Policy and Power of the Rulers of the World. And when I come to shew how eminent and successful he was in discharging his Commission, in asserting the Truth of the Gospel, in Preaching, and Suffering for it, you will the less wonder, that *Christ* should go out of the common Road of his Proceedings, in order to gain so very great a Support to the *Christian* Cause. I say *Christ* went out of the common Road of his Proceedings.

For

SERM. For he did not use to make particular Application to Men by working Miracles before them, when they had before had sufficient Means used to convince them, and those Means proved ineffectual. Even in his own Country, about Capernaum, he did not many Miracles, because of their Unbelief. *Mat. xiii. 55. 58.* he cured there a few sick Persons, and when he found that this was to no purpose, he left them to their own Counsels. *Mark, vi. 1---5.* It is certain that *Herod desired to see some Miracles wrought by Christ, Luke xxiii. 8.* But our Saviour knew him to be an incorrigible Tyrant, and therefore would not expose his divine Power to be despised by a Royal Infidel, but contrary to all this, he did, without *Saul's* seeking, or asking, any such Favour, and while he was actually engaged in the Work, which is of all other the most hateful to him, I mean the persecuting his Church, vouchsafe such a Miracle to him, as he never did to any other Man, especially to a hardened Unbeliever.

The Inference I shall at present make from what has been said, is, that it is highly unreasonable to expect, that *Christ* should use such Means for the Conversion of any ordinary Man, as he did for that of *Saul*. This I say, because it is usual with some Men to draw Proofs of God's dealing

dealing with every private Man from the History of *Saul's* Conversion; but now this is very unfair,

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I. Because, as has been already observ'd, *Saul* was thus converted, not in order to be a private *Christian*, but a Minister of the very first Magnitude: And tho' he could not have been so eminent as he was in this Respect, unless he had had all the Virtues of the private *Christian*, and could not have been so instrumental in saving others, except he had saved himself too; yet it is evident, that the main Design of *Christ*, in his singular Vouchsafements to him, were primarily for the Enlargement of the Church, and promoting the Belief, and Practice of *Christianity* in all Nations. Therefore no such Indulgence is to be expected in Behalf of any Man, except it can be suppos'd, that his Conversion would as much advance the Honour of God, and be as serviceable to the Furtherance of *Christianity*, as *Saul's* was. And it is farther to be consider'd, that there is no manner of Proof, nor any Reason to believe, that God ever wrought a Miracle for the Conversion of a Man that was already a *Christian*: They were always wrought for the Conviction of Infidels, who were before Strangers to the Gospel of *Christ*, but had good inward Dispositions: Whereas they who would draw Arguments from

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the Conversion of *Saul*, for God's like Proceeding now-a-days, mean the Conversion of such as are already *Christians* in Profession, or at least have all the ordinary Means of being so, which God now affords to Man. And it is certain, that nothing like a Miracle can reasonably be expected in this Case.

2. In Truth, the Conversion of this Persecutor was so far from being intended to be an Example of *Christ's* treating other Men, that the next End for which it was wrought, after gaining so considerable a Person to be a Planter of the Gospel, was, that the History of his Conversion might be a standing Proof of the Truth and Certainty of the *Christian* Religion. This is evident from the Words of *Christ Jesus* to him, *I have appeared unto thee for this Purpose, to make thee a Witness of those Things which thou hast seen*, Acts xxvi. 16. The Things which he had seen must import the present Appearance of *Christ*, attended with so many wonderful Circumstances: And we accordingly find, that St. *Paul* does frequently insist upon it, when he was to plead the *Christian* Cause, or to establish the Belief of the Gospel, as a very great Proof of *Christ's* being raised from the Dead, and of the whole System of *Christianity*. And certainly the Proof was very great, to see a Man, that was known to have been a notorious

torious Enemy of *Christ* and his Gospel, S E R M.
 and a furious Blasphemer and Murderer of V.
 all that he could convict of being *Christians*; to see such a Man not only confessing his Errors, and taking Shame to himself on that Account, but openly attesting, zealously contending for, the Truth of *Christianity*; spending all his Time, and Care, and Strength, in Vindication of *Christ Jesus*, and in making Converts to him; travelling to many remote Parts of the World for this only Purpose; abandoning all the Comforts of Life, and his former Friendships, and worldly Expectances, for this End; without any reasonable Hopes of getting any Thing by it in this World, but Contempt and Disgrace (which were indeed plentifully pour'd upon him) Want, and other Difficulties, (which were his daily Portion) severe bodily Punishments, and Death, which he actually incurr'd for *Christ's* Sake; and when he came to give Account of his Activeness and Sufferings in this Cause, grounding all that he said or did upon this History of his Conversion; as supposing, that the Fact which converted him, when he had perswaded People of the Belief of it, would be very effectual in converting others; is not only a most undeniable Proof of the Matter of Fact itself, but a very strong Argument for the

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Support of that Religion, in the Service of which he afterwards liv'd and died. As this Apostle's Success in preaching the Gospel was equal, or superior to any of the rest, so he himself undertook it purely on the Assurance he had of the Truth of the Gospel, as proved to him by this most remarkable Matter of Fact; so we may justly conceive, that one of the capital Proofs he used for convincing others, was the relating to them the History of his own Conversion. But as no Man, especially in this Age, is to expect to be qualify'd for the Ministry in that Manner that this Apostle was, so much less is any private *Christian* to suppose, that he is to be treated by *Jesus Christ* in such a Manner, that the Providences which happen to him should be a standing Proof of the Certainty of *Christianity* to all future Generations.

III. I now come to consider him as converted; no longer as *Saul*, but as *Paul*, as an Apostle and Saint, as a Prime Minister of *Christ Jesus*, and a most exemplary *Christian*.

1. As an Apostle and Minister.

2. Then as an exemplary Saint or *Christian*.

And this is the most proper Method, when I speak of this great Man: For he was really a Minister before he was perfectly a *Christian*; I mean, before he was baptiz'd

tiz'd: This, probably, was peculiar to him, as well as many other Particulars also were. He was declar'd to be *a Minister, and a Witness of what he had seen*, by the Voice of *Christ Jesus* himself, when he appeared to him in the Way: And it seems very plain, that he never had any other Ordination to the Apostolical Office; for he declares himself *an Apostle not of Men, neither by Man, but by Jesus Christ*, Gal. i. 1. He received his Commission immediately from the Mouth of his Master; but he was baptized three Days after this by *Ananias*, who is said to have been One of the Seventy: However, we are sure he was a Person expressly nominated by *Christ*, to administer this Sacrament to him.

Now, if we consider him as an Apostle, we shall scarce be able to discover one good Property, in which he did not excell, excepting this one Point, that he was not a graceful Speaker, 2 Cor. x. 10. xi. 6. Let us consider,

1. His Abilities; 2. His good Moral Dispositions for this Office.

1. His Abilities: And certainly these consider'd all together, were the greatest that ever any one meer mortal Man was possess'd of. He had, before his Conversion, been well instructed in the *Jewish* Learning under the Direction of *Gamaliel*, and had probably

S E R M.

W^ho bably learn'd Three Languages, the *Greek*
 at *Tarsus*, whereof he was a Native; the
 pure *Hebrew* of *Gamaliel*; the vulgar *Sy-*
riac by dwelling at *Jerusalem*; and he
 had, no doubt, several others instill'd in-
 to him by the Documents of the Spirit,
 after his Conversion, insomuch, that he
 durst say, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 18. *I speak with*
Tongues more than you all; by which he
 was qualify'd to preach the Gospel, and
 freely converse with Men of all Nations,
 to whom he was sent as an Embassador of
Christ; for he was, in an especial Manner,
 the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and therefore
 it was necessary that he should be inspired
 with the Knowledge of as many Tongues
 as were spoken by the several Nations,
 where he was to raise Churches; and to
 them he preached, not with the enticing
 Words of Man's Wisdom, but with the
 Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Pow-
 er; that is, he prov'd the Truth of what
 he said, by doing very surprising Miracles.
 And it seems evident, that this glorious
 Apostle did some stupendous Works, such
 as were not done by the rest, even of the
 Apostles themselves. This, I think, must
 be meant by the *δυνάμεις & τυχέας*, *Acts*
 xix. 11. which is well enough render'd
 by the *English*, *special Miracles*: And
 we must, in Justice, confess, that his Re-
 solution was much beyond what is com-
 mon,

mon, when we consider that Presence of Mind, that Freedom of Speech, and undaunted Courage, with which this Apostle publish'd the Gospel wherever he came, and defended that, and himself, before the High-Priest of the *Jews*, *Felix*, *Faustus*, King *Agrippa*, and perhaps before *Nero* himself; for he is generally thought to characterize that Emperor under the very fitting Title of a Lion, from whose Mouth he says *he was deliver'd*: And he intimates, *2 Tim. iv. 16, 17*, that he made more than one Answer, or Plea, for *Christianity*, and for himself, in his Presence. It was certainly *Nero*, or his Deputy; and here his Constancy and Resolution had the greatest Trial that was possible; for *no Man stood by him, but all forsook him*. But he had one that always stood by him, and inspired him with Courage and Comfort, even *Jesus*, whom he had formerly persecuted. On all these Accounts *St. Paul* might justly say, *who is so sufficient for these Things?* For so the most judicious do understand that Text, *q. d.* who is, in all Respects, so well qualify'd to perform all Parts of the Ministerial Duty as I am? *2 Cor. ii. 16*. But what do I speak of his Boldness in speaking so freely before Secular Princes, when it is evident that he used the same, or greater Liberty, before one, whom, if

S E R M.

V.


you will believe the Church of *Rome*, was superior to all Kings and Emperors, and the most mighty secular Potentates? I mean *Peter*, whom they, the Writers of the Church of *Rome*, stile not only the Prince of the Apostles, but the Vicar of *Christ*, and attribute to him, and his Successors, an absolute Authority not only over his Fellow Apostles, but over all mortal Men: But we have an unanswerable Demonstration, that St. *Paul* acknowledg'd no such Authority in him, for *he withstood him to the Face*, and declares, that *he was to be blamed*, Gal. ii. 11, 14.

2. If we consider the good Moral Qualifications of a Minister, or Apostle, we shall find them to have all met in St. *Paul*: And,

1. Our Lord himself saw one good Property in him, even before his Conversion; he counted, or consider'd him as a faithful, or trusty Man, who would with Integrity discharge any Office committed to him: And as the Dispensation or Stewardship of the Gospel was committed to him, so he always lived under a Sense of this great Trust repos'd in him, as knowing that *it is required of Stewards that a Man be found faithful*, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. and 1 Cor. ix. 17.

2. He had ever been a Person of a very religious Disposition, full of Zeal for God;
and

and what he thought the Truth. It was this that first made him so zealous for the *Jewish* Religion, which he look'd upon as the only Law, and Will of God, and therefore he persecuted all that oppos'd it; and this very same Temper made him afterwards so zealous a Preacher of *Christianity*: For his natural Regard to God, and divine Truth, inclin'd him to promote whatever Cause he had espoused in Things relating to God, with the greatest Degree of Affection; and as this first made him a zealous *Jew*, so it afterwards render'd him a more zealous Minister of *Christ Jesus*.

3. He was one that had a great Love and Zeal for the Souls of Men, lest they should stray, and perish in the Ways of Vice and Error; and this dispos'd him to be so violent against the Gospel, while he look'd upon it as a late Invention, contrary to the Religion which they had received from *Abraham, Moses*, and the Prophets; and to be so earnestly attach'd to the Gospel, after he was once effectually convinc'd that it was from God. It must be confess'd, that the Apostle had these good Qualities, in some Measure, before he was converted: And as he intimates his Opinion, that *Christ* put him into the Ministry upon Consideration that he was faithful, or trusty; so a Man may presume

S E R M. ^{V.} presume to say, that he was singled out from among the unbelieving *Jews*, and his own Fellow-Persecutors, to be converted to the *Christian* Faith, on Account of these other good Dispositions, which the Discerner of Hearts clearly observ'd in him. It is true, when he is arguing the Point with the unbelieving *Jews*, he assigns no other Reason for his own being adopted into the Church, and Apostleship of *Christ*, but the absolute Will of God, who has the same, or greater Power to dispose of Men, as the Potter has over the Clay, and the Reason of whose Proceedings do not always appear to the most discerning Men: But yet, on other Occasions, he gives us sufficient Hints that he had, before his Conversion, such pious Tendencies as might be sufficient to move *Jesus Christ* to make some Distinctions between himself, and other the main Body of unbelieving *Jews*. But neither, on the other Side, can it be reasonably doubted, but that all the good Dispositions which he had before, were mightily improv'd and heighten'd after he had receiv'd the Holy Ghost, and became a Disciple and Apostle of *Christ*. And certainly, never did any Man give greater Demonstration of the most hearty Concern for the spiritual Good of others, than this Apostle: He declares he could even wish himself de-
voted

voted to temporal Death, or Destruction S E R M.
from Christ, for his Brethren, his Kins-
men, according to the Flesh, Rom. ix. 3:
 And see how pathetically he expresses
 himself to this Purpose, Chap. x. 1. *Bre-*
thren, my Heart's Desire, and Prayer to
God for Israel is, that they may be saved.
 Nay, he lets us know, that in indifferent
 Things, where he was left wholly to his
 own Disposal, *he became all Things to all*
Men, that he might by all Means (gain or)
save some, or that he might save all, as
 some, with great Probability, read that
 Text, 1 Cor. ix. 22. He sought not his
 own Profit, *but the Profit of many, that*
they might be saved, Chap. x. 33. As
 his Sufferings were very great, so he de-
 clares, that he underwent them with this
 View, among others, that he might there-
 by provoke the Zeal of Men to value, and
 live in Obedience to the Gospel; for, says
 he, *I endure all things for the Elects Sake,*
that they may obtain the Salvation which
is in Christ Jesus.

But then there were some Graces that
 were more peculiarly requisite to the Apo-
 stolical and Pastoral Office, and such as he
 had no Occasion to exercise, while he was
 an *Infidel* and Persecutor; and were, as it
 were, perfectly new Graces, and Beauties of
 his Mind, which bloom'd forth, and were
 produc'd by the strong Influences of the
 Holy Spirit, such were,

4. His

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V.

4. His most admirable Patience under Sufferings for the Sake of *Christ*. And it is evident, that he enter'd upon his Apostolical Office with an Expectation of being treated, for the Time to come, in the same Manner that he had formerly treated others: Whereas temporal Princes encourage Men to serve them by Assurances of Wealth and Honour, on the contrary, our Saviour, as a spiritual King, invited Men to serve him, by promising them Sufferings and Afflictions here on Earth, and Rewards only in Reversion. Accordingly *Christ* tells *Ananias*, *I will shew him (Paul) how great Things he shall suffer for my Names Sake*, Acts ix. 16. I may truly, and without a Figure, say, the Time would fail me to give a particular History of all that this blessed Man endur'd upon Account of Religion: You have the brief Account of them, 2 *Cor.* xi. 23, - 27. and every Sentence there does well deserve the Meditation of more Minutes than are now left for the finishing of my Discourse. This, and much more, he underwent with a chearful Submission: He often expresses his Joy and Satisfaction in all the severe Treatment that he met with; and *Col.* i. 24. he calls it *a filling up that which was behind of the Affliction of Christ in his Flesh*. He consider'd his Brother Apostles as before-hand with him in



in undergoing Persecutions: They had for Two Years been in a suffering Condition, while he himself was at Ease, (if any Persecutor can be so) and, so far as appears, in a prosperous outward Condition, and here he expresses his own inward Comfort, that he was now making up former Defects, and equalling the other Apostles in suffering for *Christ's* Sake; therefore, *Gal. vi. 17*, he glories in *that he bore about in his Body the Marks of the Lord Jesus*; that is, the Scars occasion'd by his being often scourg'd and stoned; which he esteem'd more certain Proofs that he belong'd to *Christ*, than the Circumcision of the Flesh, against which he had there been arguing. He clearly makes these Scars a Badge of his Apostleship; as he does again *2 Cor. vi. 4*. where he declares how he and his Brethren approved themselves Ministers of *Christ*, viz. in *much Patience, Afflictions, Necessities, &c.* And never did this Apostle say a Thing more worthy of himself than when upon *Agabus's* telling him, that the *Jews* would bind him, that is, imprison him, if he went to *Jerusalem*, viz. *I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus*, *Acts xxi. 13*.

5. Another Grace, which rendereth St. Paul so conspicuous in the Apostolical Office, was his signal Tenderness and Regard for

SERM. for all *Christians* within the Verge of his
V. Care and Inspection. Of this he gave a great
 Specimen, when he said, *If Meat make my Brother to offend, or to fall into Infidelity, or Apostacy, I will eat no Meat (no such Meat) while the World endureth, rather than to make my Brother to offend, 1 Cor. viii. 13. and again, Who is weak, and I am not weak? the true Meaning is, who is hurt, and injured, and I have not a Sense of the Wrong done? Who is offended? that is, who is led into Sin, made to stumble, or fall into Infidelity, or Apostacy, and I burn not with just Zeal and Indignation against them that are the Occasion of it? Nay, he declares, as well became the Character of an Apostle, that he had the Care, or a solicitous Concern for all the Churches, 2. Cor. xi. 28, 29. so as to prevent, or find a Cure, if it were possible for all the Mischiefs that threatned either the Body, or any single Members of it. See in what emphatick Terms he expresses his Affections to the Christians at Corinth; I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you, tho' the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved [of you] 2. Cor. xii. 15. And you may observe how, thro' both his Epistles to the Corinthians, and that to the Galatians, he does, with a Mixture of gentle Reproofs, and affectionate Endearments, endeavour to re-
cover*

cover the good Inclinations of the People of both these Churches, when their Respect toward him was grown cool by means of the base Insinuations of false Apostles, and on the Account of his having told them some severe Truths. See how when he saw Occasion to apprehend some vicious *Christians* at *Philippi*, he does at the same time give Proof of a most tender Compassion toward them, *Many*, says he, *walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ.* Phil. iii. 18.

6. And yet he knew, when he saw it necessary, to use Severity ; he not only, *struck Elymas* with a judicial blindness, *for endeavouring to turn away Sergius Paulus from the Faith*, Acts xiii. 5---12 : but he deliver'd incorrigible Hereticks to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme : Nay, he pronounces *Anathema* against all them that love not the Lord *Jesus Christ* ; he decreed Excommunication against the incestuous *Corinthian*, when no other means could reclaim him ; and threatens others among them with the same Discipline, who *had not repented of the Uncleannefs, and Fornication, and Lasciviousnefs, which they had committed*, 2. Cor. xii. 21. And was so far from indulging, or fondling Men in their Heresies,

S E R M. ^{V.} lies, and Schisms, that he requires the *Christians at Rome, to mark them which cause Divisions, and Offences, and to avoid them.* And certainly it is a treacherous Charity, a cruel Mercy, for Ministers not to discharge their Office in this Respect as well as others. It may indeed be their own Interest to speak smooth Things, to prophesy Deceits; but he that copies *St. Paul's Example* must seek the real Profit of his People, rather than his own temporal Advantage.

7. The last Excellency of *St. Paul* considered as an Apostle, was his indefatigable Labour, and Industry, in preaching the Gospel, and planting Churches. And here first let us observe his own Account of this Matter, *from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum I have preached the Gospel of Christ*; Rom. xv. 19, and this was many years before his Death. We are certain that after this he himself was carried Prisoner into *Rome*, far beyond *Illyricum*, and there lived two Years, *Acts xxvii. 30.* how long more he continued there we cannot be informed from Scripture, or where he spent the remainder of his Life: but we are informed by *St. Clement* his Fellow-Labourer, that this great Apostle extended his Conquests to the utmost Bounds of the West, which certainly implies his preaching in *Spain*, to which Country we know



know from his own Writings he intended an Expedition long before. Some learned Men suppose that by the utmost Bounds of the West he meant *Britain*. And tho' this be but a Conjecture, yet it is not altogether improbable. But however this were, yet they who have the best skill in *Geography* cannot but be sensible, how vast a Tract of Land lies between *Judea* and *Spain*: and for one Man, in little more than thirty years Time, to raise Churches to *Christ* in Countries so vastly remote, was indeed an undeniable Proof of his more than humane Courage and Activeness in doing the Work of God; he might well therefore without any Suspicion of exceeding, say, that he *laboured more abundantly than all* the rest of the Apostles, 1. Cor. xv. 10. and so that of our Saviour was eminently fulfilled to him, *The last shall be first*: he who was last call'd into the Vineyard of all the Apostles, exceeded them all in Labour and Industry, and shall by consequence obtain a more full Reward: But

2. Let St. Paul be considered not only in his Apostolical Character, but as a *Christian* at large, and here

1. His Faith, one may safely say, was the least valuable of those Divine Graces, which dwelt in his Soul; because it was produced in him by such extraordinary
 S means,

S E R M. means, that there was very little Room for
 V. him to exercise his own Freedom, or Choice :
 for how was it possible almost for human
 Nature to oppose such Demonstration, as
Christ gave to him by descending from Hea-
 ven, and speaking to him in the manner
 that he did : he was one that saw, and
 heard, and felt the Divine Appearance of
Christ Jesus to him, and therefore has no
 right to that Beatitude pronounced by our
 Saviour upon them, *who have not seen,*
and yet have believed. But we may dare
 affirm that his Assurance was proportion-
 able to the Evidence he had of the Truth
 of the Gospel. For he lets us know in
 my Text, that *the Grace of God was abund-*
ant toward him in Faith ; and indeed the
 great things which he continually was do-
 ing and suffering for *Christ's* sake were a
 sufficient Proof of this ; and he informs
 us what Principle it was by which he was
 actuated, during the time of his Conflicts.
The Life that I now live in the Flesh, I live
by the Faith of the Son of God. Gal. ii. 20.
 This was his main Support under all his
 Difficulties and Vexations. Tho' it is pos-
 sible that by Faith he might here mean that
 Assurance of working Miracles, which was
 given to the Apostles, and first planters of
 Christianity, to whom our Saviour pro-
 mised, that if they commanded a Moun-
 tain to remove into the Sea, it should obey :
 but

but if this be the Meaning of the Faith S E R M. V.
 here mention'd, it belongs to the former
 Head, viz. his Apostolical Abilities.

2. But he tells us the Grace of God was likewise abundant toward him in Love; and he meant, no doubt, principally the Love of God and *Christ Jesus*. To this purpose we have one of the most elegant Paragraphs in all St. Paul's Writings. *I am persuaded that neither Life, nor Death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Rom. viii. 38. 39. he must mean both that Love with which God loved him and all good *Christians*, and that Love with which they loved him again: For these two are inseparable Reciprocal things, God loves none but them who keep the Commandments, and especially the first and greatest; I mean he loves none else with a paternal saving Love. And at another Place he lets us know what it was that made him and others so diligent in their Duty, and it was this, *the Love of Christ*, says he, *constraineth us*; for, as he there goes on, *if one died for all, then were all dead, and he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them,*

S E R M. *and rose again.* 2. Cor. v. 14, 15. And
 V. as he on all Occasions magnifies the Love
 of *Christ* toward himself; so by the whole
 Tenour of his Life, after he was convert-
 ed, he shew'd that *Christ's* Love toward
 him was not lost.

3. He was a true Example of Repen-
 tance. He not only received *the Baptism*
of Repentance for the Remission of Sins,
but he brought forth Fruit worthy of Re-
pentance in the whole future Course of his
 Life. There was one particular in it
 which peculiarly deserves our Notice and
 Imitation, I mean, that long after he was
 become an Apostle, and a new Man, yet
 still he reflects upon the gross Guilt he had
 contracted by being a Persecutor of good
Christians; upon this express Considerati-
 on he calls himself the *chief of Sinners*
 in one of the last Epistles he wrote,
 1 Tim. i. 13. 15. and tho' he was not in
 other Respects behind the very chiefest
 Apostle; yet in one point he declares him-
 self the least of them, and one that did
 not deserve to be called an Apostle, *viz.*
 because he persecuted the Church of God.
 1. Cor. xv. 9.

4. His universal Love and Charity ap-
 pear in his Readiness to cure the Pains and
 Aches, the Grievs and Diseases, of the Peo-
 ple among whom he travelled: he that so
 freely gave what he had, would undoubt-
 edly

edly have been as liberal of his Money, if he had had it : He gave Proof of his Charity also in forgiving his bitter, most implacable Emenies, the unbelieving *Jews*, and expressing a most tender Affection toward them. And tho' he reflects with some Resentment upon the Cowardice of all his fellow Labourers, who forsook him, when he first appeared before *Nero*, or his Deputy, yet he *prays God, it may not be laid to their charge.* 2. Tim. iv. 16. *Alexander* who had formerly adhered to him, but afterwards deserted the *Christian* cause, and greatly withstood his Words, provoked him to say, *the Lord reward him according to his Works.* 2. Tim. iv. 14. For he made a great Difference between them who sinned thro' humane Infirmary, or for want of a better Judgment, and them who had known and profess'd the Truth, and yet afterwards renounced it. He gave Proof of his Love both to God and Man, by his devout frame of Mind : for there is no more certain Sign, and Indication of a Man's being well affected towards God, than that his Thoughts, Desires, and Inclinations do flow toward him. We shew that our Minds have a strong Tendency toward the Almighty, when they frequently raise themselves in devout Prayers, and Ejaculations to the King of Heaven : and we cannot better express our real Charity

S E R M. to Men, than by frequently Addressing our
 V. Prayers to God in their behalf. Now he
 that reads *St. Paul's* Epistles will find them, especially at the Beginning and End, fill'd with earnest Petitions, or Thanksgivings to God, in behalf of those to whom he writes, and frequently he intimates to them how constant, and earnest he was with God in his Prayers, especially for their Spiritual and Eternal good; and if I should undertake to rehearse to you all the Places to this purpose, you would think me too unreasonably long, tho' upon a most delightful Subject. I shall therefore rather leave these particulars to every one's private Observation; yet let me earnestly request you forthwith to betake your selves to the diligent Reading of them, and that you reflect as you go along upon the Devotion, and other Graces, which shine so bright in every Page of those Divine Writings, and that you endeavour to persuade your selves into a close Imitation of them.

5. He was exemplary for his preaching of Submission and Loyalty, even to Heathenish Emperours, and Jewish Emperours, and that *not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience Sake.*

6. He had the Ornament of a meek and humble Spirit. He condescended to Men of low Estate. He treated *Onesimus*, a Slave

Slave, that had run away from his Master, and was converted to Christianity by hearing this Apostle's Sermons, with all that Regard that could be expected from one Friend to another ; he sent him home to his Master *Philemon*, he became his Security, or Bondsman, for what he had purloined from his Master. He, who formerly breathed nothing but Threatnings and Slaughters against others, was now so much the reverse of his former self, that *being reviled he blessed, being defamed he intreated*, or used no Language but what was full of Lenity and Submission, 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. and thus he changed the Temper of the Lion into that of the Lamb : and to finish his Character of an humble Man, after he had briefly mention'd his Apostolical Labours, he is so far from assuming the Glory of them to himself, that he attributes them all to God ; *yet it was not I, says he, but the Grace of God which was with me.* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

7. I shall mention but one more of those Virtues which gave a Lustre to him, both as a *Christian*, and an Apostle ; I mean his eminent Self-denial : for he abandoned all the honest innocent Enjoyments of Life, that he might be the more at leisure effectually to carry on that Work, and discharge that Trust, which *Christ* had committed to him ; I mean, to publish the Gos-

S E R M. V. pel to the remotest Parts of the World. He had no House nor Home, we have no certain dwelling Place, says he, 1 Cor. iv. 11. excepting for two Years at Rome. Nay, says he, *we both Hunger, and Thirst, and are Naked, and Buffeted, and labour Working with our Hands*: for tho' he always asserted his right to Maintenance, yet he would never accept any from the *Corinthians*, or *Thessalonians*, People that inhabited the richest Cities of any in which he ever raised a Church; (the Reason whereof it would be too long now to enquire.) And he had just Reason to bless God, that *in whatsoever State he was he had learned to be content*, Phil. iv. 11. he *knew how to abound*, and he had the same Dispositions in this Respect with other Men, he wished that the *Christians at Corinth did reign, that he might reign together with them*, 1 Cor. iv. 8. But he found it his Duty at present to submit to all the Difficulties of a travelling, indigent Condition, in order to promote the Knowledge of Christianity: and to finish this Grace of Self-denial, he says of himself, *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection, lest that by any means, when I had preached to others, I myself should be a cast away*; lest, after he had fully discharged his Office as an Apostle, and Minister, he should lose all his Labour, and miss of a Reward

ward hereafter for his Defect in the Duties ^{S E R M.} of a private Christian ; for he had taken up his Cross, and was ready to follow his Master. 

And so he did effectually before the End of *Nero's* Reign. I mean, he actually suffer'd Death for being an Apostle of *Christ Jesus*, and one of the most zealous and able Advocates of the Christian Cause. *Nero* had set the City of *Rome* on Fire, and, to take off the Odium from himself, threw it upon the Poor Christians ; which was the Occasion of what is commonly call'd the first of the Ten general Persecutions, which began in the Year of *Christ* 64. Both the Apostles, *Peter* and *Paul* were at *Rome* before the Persecution ended : The first led the Way, and died by Crucifixion. *St. Paul* had his Head struck off with a Sword, if we may believe the best Historians. In truth, he now died a Martyr ; but he had liv'd one several Years before : For he was in Deaths oft, he died daily, he was always expos'd to Death for *Christ's* Sake, and he had for many Years been in Expectation of this bloody Baptism. Soon after he arrived at *Rome*, he wrote his Epistle to the *Philippians* ; and it seems plain, that even then he was under Apprehensions of having his Blood pour'd out upon the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith, Phil. ii. 17. that

S-E-R-M. that is, in plain Terms, of dying a **Martyr**, to confirm the *Philippians*, and other *Christians*, in the Belief of the Gospel: Yet it pleased God to delay his Death several Years after this, and thereby to give him Time after his Enlargement from the Custody he had been under, to go to *Spain*, if not further, to settle the *Christian* Religion there. But he return'd to *Rome* again too soon to live much longer, I mean, he came thither before *Nero* was dead, whose particular Spite was against the most innocent, virtuous, and deserving, against such as were most unlike himself: and thus it pleased God to permit the most flagrant Wickedness to triumph over the most perfect Virtue. For if you search all the Records of Time past, you will find none more eminently vitious and cruel, than *Nero* the *Emperour*: and on the other side, I cannot but esteem *St. Paul*, after his Conversion, to have been the most exact Pattern of Virtue, that was ever yet raised by Divine Grace, that was ever yet shewed to the World in any mere Man. And if it had not been for the great Blemish of his having been so obstinate an *Infidel*, and a Persecutor, while he had sufficient Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity perpetually before him, I should not doubt to prefer him before *St. Peter*, who has always been esteemed the
prime

prime Apostle. It is hard for a Man to ^{SERM.} content himself with saying a little upon ^{V.} so vastly great a Subject. And if any judicious Man would undertake to draw his Life and Character at large from the Writings of St. *Luke*, and his own Epistles, he would certainly appear to be the best and greatest Man for the thirty last Years of his Life, and more, that was ever born of two humane Parents; the greatest I mean in all the sublime Virtues and Excellencies that are the glory of our Nature, the greatest in his Actions and Sufferings for the benefit of Mankind, and for the Honour of his Maker and Redeemer; the greatest in his Contempt of the Glories and Blandishments of the World, the greatest in making more Converts to God. and true solid Virtue, in which we may dare be bold to say no Man ever came near him. St. *Peter* might indeed convert more at one Sermon, but, if we consider the great Number of Churches raised by St. *Paul*. we shall see Reason to believe that he, who came after St. *Peter*, was greater than he, in this Respect as well as many others.

In Sum, he was a Saint and an Apostle, whose Memory deserves our most pious Celebrations, and whose Example is the very best that we can imitate, next to that of *Christ Jesus* himself; and especially

SERM. ally his Writings deserve to be read with
V. Attention, and to be engraved upon our
 Hearts by the most serious Reflection. He wrote much more than any other Pen-man of the New Testament. His Writings did but bear a proportion to his other Labours. We cannot too much value his Epistles, but Men may be too excessive in their Honours to his Person. The Church of *Rome* are guilty in both Respects. His Writings are as directly against the Principles of that Church as if the Apostle by a Spirit of Prophecy had foreseen their Errours, and confuted them before they were invented ; and therefore we are not to wonder, if the *Romanists* are so far from making a proper use of them, that they do all that in them lies to keep them lock'd up from the People. But his Person they extoll, they commonly place him next to *St. Peter*, and pray to them both in the same Breath. This may at first seem an Honour, but it is rather an Indignity to him as contrary to his Doctrine ; for he has taught us that it is a fault to worship Angels, and much more is it a fault to worship the Souls of departed Men, for they at present are much inferior to Angels. The Men at *Lystra* would have sacrificed to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as supposing them to be two of *their Gods come to them in the Shape of Men*, *Acts* xiv. 12. but the Apo-
 stles

files resented the Superstition of the People with the greatest Horrour, and Indignation, and directed them to whom they should pay their Devotion, when they bid them *turn to the living God, who made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that is therein.* We shall do the most just and proper Honour to the Apostle, by imitating his Example, and studying, and practising his Writings, and praising God for raising him to be the Instrument of so much good to Mankind, and so eminent a Light in his Church.

SER-

SERMON VI.

Of the Necessity, Hardship, and Mission of Christian Pastors.

M A T. IX. 38.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest.

BY the *Harvest* here we can rationally understand nothing but the People, who by their Knowledge of *Moses*, and the Prophets, were led into an Expectation of the coming of the *Messias*. Of these our Saviour tells us, there were great Numbers, for *the Harvest truly is great*, as he expresses it in the foregoing verse; and he does this more at large *John*, iv. 35. &c. where he says to his Apostles, *Say not ye, there are yet four Months unto the Harvest?* that is, is it not commonly said by Men, when they sow their Ground, we shall reap it in four Months? (for this was the usual Time, say the Learned, between Seed-

S E R M.
VI.

S E R M. VI. Seed-time, and Harvest, in the Land of Canaan.) But our Saviour desires his Apostles to observe, that this Saying of the Jews, concerning their earthly Harvest could not be apply'd to the Spiritual Harvest, *Lift up your Eyes, and look on the Fields, for they are white already to the Harvest.* See great Companies of Men fully persuaded, that the *Messias* is suddenly to appear, and therefore in some Measure disposed to receive him: this he says, in reference to that Declaration which the Woman of *Samaria* had made a little before, ver. 25. *I know that the Messias cometh, when he cometh he will tell us all things:* And when *Christ* had assured her, *I that speak unto thee am he,* the Woman goes into the City, and tells all she met, of one that had told her all Things that ever she did, and desires them to come, and see, if *this were not the Christ*: And they comply'd with her Summons, and came to *Jesus*. From this it was evident, that even the *Samaritans* were sensible, that the Times of the coming of the *Messias* were at Hand, and that therefore they were ready to receive him, and his Doctrine, as soon as they were duly inform'd, and thoroughly acquainted with them: And for the Encouragement of them, to assist him in this Harvest, by preaching the Gospel to them who were ready to hear it, he presently adds, ver.

ver. 36. *He that Reapeth receiveth Wages and gathereth Fruit unto Life Eternal, be that Soweth, and he that Reapeth, or rather, that the Sower, that is, the ancient Prophets, who did many Ages before give Assurance of a *Messias* to come, and the Reaper, that is, the Apostles, and other Ministers of *Christ Jesus*, may Rejoice together*; that both they who from the beginning of the World had foretold the coming of *Christ*, and they who had preach'd him, and his Gospel, since he was actually come, might see and enjoy the Fruit of their Labour, and receive that full Reward, which is promis'd to all faithful Labourers in the Lord's Vineyard. And herein is that Saying true (as he goes on ver. 37.) *One Soweth, and another Reapeth. I sent you to Reap that on which ye bestowed no Labour; other Men laboured, and ye are enter'd in their Labours*: In these Words our Saviour's Meaning is, that his Apostles and other Ministers had nothing to do, but to repeat, and inforce, what the old Prophets had said long before; to apply what they had said in general concerning a great Prophet, that was to arise in future Ages, to *Jesus* the Son of *Mary*: *Moses, David, Isaiab, Daniel*, and the rest, had many hundred Years before plainly enough taught, that the *Messias* was to come, and what sort of

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Person

S E R M. Person he was to be; the Apostles there-
VI. fore, and their Assistants had little left
 to be done by them, but only to give notice to the People, that their Master *Jesus* of *Nazareth* was the very Person in whom all the Predictions of *Moses*, and the Prophets should be fulfilled. The Seeds of *Christianity* had in all the foregoing Ages of the World been sown by Holy Men of Old, who spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*: And the Business of *Christ's* Ministers was only, or principally to shew Men, that the Prophecies of the Old Testament were accomplish'd, and by this means to convince those who knew, and believed the Writings of their own Prophets, and so were in Effect already converted to their Hand. And our Saviour plainly tells them, that there were considerable Numbers prepar'd, and disposed to close with him, and submit to him as their Master and Saviour: This was the great Harvest of which he speaks in my Text; when therefore he complains for want of Reapers, or Labourers, it is evident he means such as the Apostles, and **LXX** Disciples, Men fit to instruct others in the Doctrine of the Kingdom of God, to be commission'd Officers for the raising Men, and listing Soldiers to fight under his Banner. In speaking further to these Words, I shall shew

I. The

I. The Necessity of having Labourers in the spiritual Harvest. SERM.
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II. The great Hardship of Men in duly discharging themselves in this weighty Employ.

III. By whom they are to be sent.

IV. The great Reason that all *Christians* have heartily to pray to God, that he would send Labourers into the Harvest.

I. The great Necessity of Labourers in the Harvest. As the People, that were fitly disposed to embrace *Christ* and his Gospel, are here call'd God's Harvest, so they that were to be employ'd under *Christ Jesus*, to further this excellent Work of bringing Men to the Belief of the Gospel, in gathering the good Wheat into the Garner, are by *Christ* call'd Labourers in the Harvest, or in the Vineyard, as 'tis in the Parable, *Matth. xx.* Our Saviour would never have complain'd of the great Scarcity of them, and exhorted Men to pray for an Increase of their Numbers, if he had not known them to be exceeding useful and necessary for the promoting the great End which he had in View; that is, the Salvation of the Souls of Men. He had but lxxxii, his xii Apostles, and lxx Disciples, while he was here on Earth; and these he thought a small Number, considering the vast Multitudes of People who were to be converted: And, if our Savi-

SERM. our saw Reason to lament the Fewness of
VI. his Assistants, while he was himself alive ;
 if he were then so sensible of the Necessity
 of having others to give a helping Hand
 toward the accomplishing the great Work
 which he had to do, whilst he was personally
 here on Earth ; much more must he
 perceive the Necessity of having a constant
 Succession of Labourers, after he
 was ascended up into Heaven, and was no
 more to be seen. During the Time that
 he lived here below, he preached the
 Gospel to one Nation only, and that a
 very small one, tho' exceeding populous ;
 and in the Three Years Time, in which
 he exercised his Prophetick Office, he
 might have personally done Miracles, and
 preach'd Sermons, in every considerable
 Town of the Holy Land, without using
 any extraordinary divine Power for the
 conveying himself from Place to Place with
 the greater Expedition. He might have justly
 expected and demanded of every one to
 whom he had an Opportunity of speaking,
 that he should teach and inform his Neigh-
 bours of what he had seen and heard ;
 and summon others from all Parts, whi-
 ther they were going, to come and ap-
 pear before him, and be Eye-Witnesses of
 his Miracles, and receive from him all
 necessary Instructions, at any particular
 Place that he should have thought fit to
 assign,

assign, or choose for his own continual Re-^{S E R M}
sidence. While he remain'd in this World, ^{VI.}
he was capable of giving to all that con-
sulted him, clear Directions in all Particu-
lars; so that they had the less need of
any one else to guide, or inform them.
But after his Ascension into Heaven, all
Nations were to have the Gospel preach'd
to them : And it is not easy to conceive
how any one Person could, without multi-
plying Miracles every Hour, have become
a Teacher of all People in the World.
One Mouth had never been sufficient to
speak to all Mankind : One Body, with-
in the Compass of Three or Four Years,
or even of the common Period of human
Life, could never have travell'd thro' all
the several Towns of every Nation in the
Universe, and have staid in every Place a
sufficient Time to give them full Instructi-
ons in relation to their eternal Concerns :
Nor was it possible for one Half of Man-
kind to resort to the Land of *Judea*, or
any other particular Place, to receive the
Knowledge of Salvation : Therefore, af-
ter our Saviour's Ascension, the Ministry
was much more necessary than before ;
and there was also a Necessity of having
more Hearts and Hands, more Tongues
and Pens, employ'd in the Service of Reli-
gion. As the Work grew, so it was fit
the Number of Workmen should increase



in Proportion to it: Therefore, as it is already intimated, our Saviour might more easily, in his own single Person, have perform'd the Office of a Pastor, while he lived on Earth, than afterwards; and he, if any, was able to bear the Burthen of the People himself alone, especially while his Care was confin'd within so small a Province, as that of his own Country the Land of *Canaan*; yet seeing that no single Man could afterwards be sufficient for these Things, therefore, before he ascended up on high, he gave *some Apostles, and some Evangelists, and some Prophets and Teachers, that their Sound might go out into all Lands, and their Words into the Ends of the World.* He saw the absolute Necessity of a peculiar Order of Men, to take Instructions from himself in all Things that concern'd the Welfare of Mens Souls, and therefore he did, while he was present here on Earth, *send others, as his Father had sent him, and declar'd, that they who receiv'd them, and their Doctrine, receiv'd himself; and that they who despised them, despised himself.*

And lest you should imagine, that their Commission was to die with them, and that when *Christianity* was settled in any Nation, there was no further Occasion for Ministers, he expressly tells his Apostles, that *he would be with them to the*



the End of the World. It is the same Greek Phrase, whereby our Saviour denotes the End of the World twice together, *Matt. xiii. 39, 40.* With their Persons he could not be for so long a Period, for they were all to die many Ages before the End of the World; therefore the Promise made to them was design'd to be fulfill'd to their Successors: So the Apostles understood it; for they *ordain'd Elders, or Priests, in every Church,* *Acts xiv. 23.* They ordain'd some of the First-Fruits of them who were first converted in every Nation, for Bishops and Deacons, says *Clement*, the Fellow-Labourer of *St. Paul*. Sometimes you see the Apostles themselves perform'd this Office: At other Times, when there were before Bishops and Churches constituted in the neighbouring Cities, the Bishops of those Cities join'd with the Apostles in performing this Office: Thus *St. Paul* tells us, that *Timothy* was ordain'd by the laying on of his Hands, *2 Tim. i. 6.* but at another Place, *1 Tim. iv. 14.* informs us, that the *Presbytery*, that is, the neighbouring Bishops of *Asia Minor*, concurr'd with him in this Solemnity. At other Times the Bishop himself was left to ordain other Ministers, which was the Case of *Titus* in the Isle of *Crete*, *Tit. i. 5.* *St. Paul* was so far from

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thinking that the Pastoral Office in the Churches, which he had raised, was to cease with him, that when he was under an Apprehension that he should no more see the Church of *Ephesus*, he sent for *their Elders to Miletus*, and charged them to take Heed to the Flock of God, and to feed, as faithful Shepherds, the Church which he had purchased with his own Blood, *Acts xx. 17. 28.* The Apostle was so far from thinking, that when he died *Timothy's* Commission was to be out of Date in the Church of *Ephesus*, where he had made him Bishop, that he charges him in the most solemn Manner, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the Word, to perform the Work of an Evangelist, to make full Proof of his Ministry; or rather compleatly to execute his Ministry, and that upon this View, that he was now himself ready to be offer'd, and the Time of his Departure was at Hand, and the time was coming when Men would not endure sound Doctrine, but would heap up unto themselves Teachers having itching Ears, *2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 5, 6, 3.* It is evident that the *Hebrews*, that is, the Church of Natural Jews of the City of *Jerusalem* and the Land of *Palestine*, had lost several Pastors, before *St. Paul* wrote his Epistle to them: Therefore the Apostle, *ch. xiii. 7.* bids them

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Remember them that had the Rule over ^{VI.} ~~them~~ ^{ERM.} them, their Guides, or Prelates (so *ἡγεμῶν* properly signifies) he bids them follow their Faith, considering the End of their Conversation, by which he means their Death; so, I think, all do understand it: and it is probable that some of them had died Martyrs, or however had made such a Conclusion of their Administration as gave great Proof of their Integrity, and Zeal in this Office, and yet still these Hebrews had a Succession of faithful Pastors among them, whom St. Paul bids them to Obey, because they had the Rule over them, and watched for their Souls, ver. 17. And it is evident to a Demonstration, that our Saviour design'd this Succession to be perpetual and to end with the World only, when he tells us of that faithful, and wise Steward, whom his Master shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of Meat in due Season; and he pronounces a Beatitude over this Servant in the next Words, if his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing, Luke xii. 14. As sure therefore as our Lord shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead, so sure is it, that at his coming there shall be such in his Household the Church, as shall be appointed over it by him, to feed it with the Word and Sacraments.

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And indeed a Church without Pastors and Ministers is an inconsistent Thing, as inconsistent as a City, a Province, a Nation without a Magistrate, a Super-intendent, or suchlike Officers, to direct Affairs under the Sovereign King or Emperor; and to suppose that *Christ* ever intended his Church should be destitute of such Officers, and Inspectors, is to suppose, that he designed that his People should be in the same Condition, which he represents as so deplorable and calamitous in the 36th ver. of this Chapter, that is, *as Sheep scatter'd abroad, which had no Shepherd.* It is true the Ministers of *Christ*, as such, have no claim to any civil Power, such as the Kings of the *Gentiles* exercise over them; as our Saviour speaks, their Authority is only to administer the Word and Sacraments to them that are Worthy, to deny it to them that are not, to admit Men into the Church, or to shut them out of it: and that there should be particular Orders of Men assigned to this Purpose is so necessary, that it cannot be conceiv'd how the Church could at all subsist without them; therefore at the same time that our Saviour declared, that *he would build his Church on a Rock, and that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it*, he gave to Peter, and in him to the rest of the Apostles, the *Keys of this Church*, which he there,

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and often elsewhere calls the *Kingdom of Heaven*; and the known Faculty of Keys is to let Men in, and shut them out. As long therefore as this Church continues, so long did our Saviour intend that there should be such Officers, as should have the keeping of the Keys, that is, the Power of Admission and Exclusion: and the Case is plain, *to the Apostles only, and to their Successors unto the End of the World, was the Commission given to Baptize all Nations*; to them only our Saviour gave Authority to administer the other Sacrament of his Body and Blood. I am sensible that in after Ages Baptism administer'd by any common Person, was allow'd to be of such Force, as that it was not to be repeated: but still the Efficacy of Baptism administer'd in such a manner was believed by the best, and the most judicious, to proceed from the after Ratification, or Confirmation of it by the Bishop; and as to the other Sacrament, I suppose, there is not one single Precedent, or Example upon Record, that ever it was allowed to be administer'd by any, but Bishops, or Priests ordained for this Purpose: and I suppose it to be an incontestable Truth, that they who have the only Power from God of giving these Sacraments, have likewise from him the Power of with-holding them: and this is in Truth the Power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

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Heaven given to St. Peter: and it was upon these Grounds that St. Ignatius, speaking of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, says, *without these the Church is not.* I proceed to shew

II. The great Hardship of duly discharging this weighty Employ, which is intimated to us under the Metaphor of Harvesters: for the Heat and Labour with which such Workmen are exercised both at once renders their Business less tolerable than that of most others. St. Paul compares the *Life of an Active Bishop* to that of a *Warrier*, when he calls upon *Timothy* to *war a good Warfare*, 1 Tim. i. 18. and to *endure Hardship as a good Soldier of Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 3. he plainly alludes to what *Moses* says of the *Priests and Levites* in the Old Tabernacle, Num. iv. 3. where their beginning to do Service in the Publick Offices of Religion, is call'd *Entring into the Host*, that is the Army. The High-Priest, Priests, and Levites in their several Stations, are clearly compared to a Body of military Men drawn up in Battle Array for Offence and Defence; and therefore the Profanation of the Temple, and the setting aside the Sacrifice and the Priesthood by *Antiochus*, is called *the treading under Foot the Sanctuary, and the Host*, Dan. viii. 13. The *Aaronical Priesthood* was liken'd to an Army chiefly on Account of

of the precise Order and Regularity pre-^{S E R M.}scribed to them by the *Levitical* Law in the ^{VI.}Execution of that Office ; but the *Christi-*
an Priesthood is described under this Em-
 blem, not only on Account of the regular
 Subordination of the several Officers to
 the Bishop, but on account of those Diffi-
 culties, and fatiguing Labours, with
 which that Office is attended. This was in-
 deed more especially true of the Apostles
 and other Ministers in the first Ages of *Chri-*
stianity, for by reading the *Acts*, and the
Epistles of St. Paul, and the rest, it is ob-
 vious to any Man, that they always preach-
 ed at the hazard of their Lives and Liber-
 ties, they were always *Pilgrims*, and so-
 journed in a literal Sense, had no certain
 dwelling Place, exposed to all the Dangers
 of a travelling Condition of Life ; to all
 the Sufferings that the Malice of their E-
 nemies could invent. I don't here mention,
 that two of the Apostles, *Paul* and *Bar-*
nabas, did sometimes over and above all
 their Hardships, maintain themselves by
 the Labour of their own Hands ; I don't
 mention this I say, because it was no Bur-
 den laid upon them by *Christ Jesus*, none
 of those Difficulties which were by any
 Law of the Gospel entail'd upon the Apo-
 stolick Office ; but it was indeed the Ef-
 fect of their own voluntary Choice, as
 St. Paul sufficiently intimates in these
 Words,

SERM. Words, 1 Cor. ix. *I only and Barnabas, have not we Power to forbear Working?* from which it appears that St. Paul then knew none that did not live of the Gospel, but himself and his Companions only. St. John indeed mentions *some Ministers*, who would take nothing of the Gentiles, 3 Ep. 7. whether by these St. John don't mean Paul and Barnabas, who were more eminently *the Apostles of the Gentiles*, deserves to be consider'd, when 'tis remembered, that St. John wrote this Epistle to one *Gaius*, and that St. Paul Rom. xvi. 23. mentions one of this Name at *Corinth*, who was *Host to himself and to the whole Church*, that is, he generously entertained the Apostles, and all others that came thither on the Affair of Religion; and that St. John gives us this Character of *Gaius*, ver. 5. 6. that *Brethren and Strangers had been witness of his Charity before the Church*; one would be inclin'd to think, that St. John meant his Brethren Paul and Barnabas, and that therefore none but they did contribute to their own Subsistence by bodily Labours; and 'tis evident St. Paul did not think they were oblig'd to this by any Precept of the Gospel.

It would be vain and presumptuous in any Man, to compare the Labours of the Ministers of any following Age with those of

of the Apostles in all Respects, and as to every Particular.

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We cannot in Justice say, that we expose ourselves to the same degree of Poverty and Indigence by taking on us the Office of Ministry, as the Apostles and first Pastors did, when they left all, and followed *Christ*. In most *Christian* Countries a competent Maintenance is provided for the Clergy ; tho' in all Countries some never attain a Competence, even tho' they deserve it : and tho' it must be acknowledged, that in this and all other Countries there are some noble Encouragements, and here or there a very rich Preferment is the Reward of an industrious Minister ; all who know any thing of the World must be sensible, that taking holy Orders is not the way to be rich ; and very many in this Nation, as well as others, that have been an Ornament to the Ministry while living, and that have with Honour to the Church and themselves discharged the Office of Bishops, have yet left their Families in extreme Want and Indigence. If a Persecution fall on the Church, the Ministers are the first that suffer, and usually drink deeper of that Cup than other Men. Of this Queen *Mary's* Reign was a sad Example, when so many of our holy, and learned Bishops and Clergy fell a Sacrifice to *Papish* Cruelty. In the time of
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the *great Rebellion* more of them by far were sequester'd, depriv'd, banish'd, or murder'd by *Fanatick Fury*: they did not indeed burn them at a Stake, as the *Papists* did: few, in comparison, suffer'd a violent Death; but many Thousands of them with their Families lingred out a miserable Life, in extreme Want and Penury.

In one Respect I may dare be bold to compare the Sufferings of the present Clergy, with those even of the Apostles themselves, I mean, in the lying Slanders, Reproaches, and Calumnies, that are daily forg'd and publish'd against us, for being true to the Church and our own Characters. In this particular some that now call themselves *Christians* have equal'd all the Spite and Malice of the Antient *Jews* and *Heathens*, against the Primitive Pastors of the *Christian Church*. It is true, the best of the present Ministers must own, that they come infinitely behind the Apostles, and those of that Age, in Virtue and true Worth, and we cannot deserve such a Reputation as they did, and for that Reason we must not tax the Guilt of them who slander us at so high a Rate as that of those, who spoke evil of the Apostles without Cause. Yet one thing I may truly say, that, if the Apostles should now rise from the Dead, and resume the Office of Bishops in the Church, and if they who perform'd the

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the Office of Priests, or Ministers under them, were now to act in our stead, it were impossible, that they could escape the same Indignities and Reproaches, which we now suffer; except they could please Men of quite contrary Tempers, opposite Interests and Dispositions; except they could blow Heat and Cold with the same Breath.

In another Respect it must be acknowledged, that the Labours of the Ministers of the late Ages, and the present, are greater than those of any that went before; I mean, in their Studies and Researches after Knowledge in the Scriptures, and other antient Learning: for what the Apostles had by immediate Inspiration, that is, Languages, must now be learn'd by a long, painful, costly Method of Learning; and without this what the Apostles wrote by the Directions of the Holy Ghost cannot be truly understood. He that knows how many Sermons are weekly preach'd, how many Books of great and exquisite Learning have been Publish'd since the *Reformation*, and still are yearly Printed (and alas who almost can know one half of them?) must be forc'd to confess that the Labours of the Modern Clergy do infinitely surpass those of all foregoing Ages. There are, and ever were and will be Loiterers in all Professions; but I believe it is certain to

SERM. a Demonstration, that more Study and
 VI. Learning is at this Day required to fit a
 Man for Deacon's Orders, than was in some
 of the best Ages next after the Apostles necessary for the Office of a Bishop. Some I know will allow none to be painful Laborious Teachers, but such as can in the Pulpit give Proof of a strenuous Voice, and robust Pronunciation. They think the Labour of a Preacher consists in the vehement Agitation of his Body for an Hour together in delivering his Sermon. But all that are judicious must despise this, in comparison of that Care and Application which the Minister uses in the foregoing Week, to provide spiritual Food for his People; not the Straining of the Voice, and violent Motion of the Body in Preaching, but the Strength of Argument, the Propriety, Seasonableness, and Coherence of the Sermon, are the best Signs of a Laborious Minister.

III. The next point is by whom they are to be sent, and our Saviour tells us it must be by the Lord of the Vineyard. And here

1. I shall prove the Necessity of a Call from God.

2. I shall shew how God calls Men to the Ministry.

1. The Necessity of a Call from God. And this is necessary, because the *Ch: isti-*
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an Minister performs all parts of his Office in the Name of God. When he preaches he does not only exhort Men, as any Man may his Friend, or Neighbour, to do his Duty, but he does as a Commission'd Officer require Men to comply with the Divine Will, and to submit to his Laws. It is a Sin to reject any wholesome Advice, any Spiritual Instruction, from whatever Hand it come, if it be given with Seriousness and good Will; but is especially so, to resist, or reject the Authoriz'd Preaching of one, who is an Embassador of God, *who beseeches Men by us*, says the Apostle, *who prays you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. v. 20. The Bishops of the seven Churches in *Asia*, to whom St. John wrote his *Revelation*, are throughout the three first Chapters of that Book call'd *the Angels of the seven Churches*: The known Office of Angels is to carry God's Commands to Men; on this Account those seven Bishops have this glorious Title given them by *Christ* himself, because it was part of their Office to require, and charge Men in the Name of God to submit to the Gospel of *Christ*: and therefore *Christ* made it so very criminal and dangerous for any to oppose, or slight the Message which his Apostles, and other Ministers deliver'd to Men; *whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of*

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that House, or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet for a Testimony against them: verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom, and Gomorrah, at the Day of Judgment, than for that City. Mat. x. 14. and this was said to the LXX Disciples, as well as to the Apostles, Luke x. 20. If indeed a Minister exceed his Commission, and preach his own Conceits for Gospel, then no such Respect is due to his Doctrine: nay, if any Angel from Heaven preach any Doctrine contrary to that contain'd in Scripture, St. Paul is so free as to pass Anathema against them: but while the Minister presses on the People any real Duty, or teaches them any certain Truth contained in the Old or New Testament, he acts as a faithful Officer of God and Christ Jesus, and the People cannot despise, or neglect his Instructions, but at their own eternal Peril: therefore says St. Paul, How shall they preach except they be sent? Rom. x. 15. By Preaching he clearly means Speaking to others by a Divine Authority: for as to pious Admonition, and friendly Reproof, it is not only lawful, but the Duty of all to give it, where they have any Reason to hope, that it will prove successful. But St. Paul supposes, that Preaching is a Divine Ordinance, which he who opposes does thereby oppose the Divine Will,

Will, and therefore that no humble *Chri-* S. E. R. M.
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stian, no Man that knows himself and
his Religion, will dare assume to himself the
Office of a publick Teacher, till he have
receiv'd a Commission for that Purpose.

But this is more especially to be consi-
der'd in Relation to the Sacraments: these
have ever been allow'd, and may clearly
be proved from Scripture to be Seals of
the Covenant betwixt God and Man:
the Priest who administers them does on
God's part set the Seal, as the Receiver
does on his own part: and certainly of all
the Presumptions and Usurpations, which
it is possible for Men to be guilty of, it
will not be easy to name a greater than this,
of a Man's assuming to himself the Privi-
lege of setting God's Seal to a Covenant
without just Grounds to believe, that he
is Authoriz'd by him. Some vain Men
seem to believe, that whoever has a Flu-
ency of Speech, a Volubility of Tongue, and
a competent Knowledge of Religion, is
thereby sufficiently Authoriz'd to become
a Preacher; that he who can pour Water on
another, break Bread, and use the solemn
Forms of Words prescribed on those Occa-
sions, has sufficient power to Administer
Sacraments; they might as well argue,
that whoever knows Military Exercise,
Discipline, and Conduct, is thereby a
General, or Commander in chief of an

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Army

SERM. VI.  Army ; that whoever is learned in the Laws, does thereby immediately commence Judge ; and if he were a *Jew*, or lived under the Law, he might with as good Reason argue, that if he were a Butcher, or Cook, who knew to kill and dress a Calf, a Lamb, a Kid, or Turtle-Dove, he was therefore capable of Offering Sacrifice as a Priest : But on the other side, all Men of Thought and Judgment must be sensible, that not the greatest Skill in military Affairs is sufficient to create a Man a General, not the most profound Knowledge of the Law can give a Man right to be a Judge ; that the most exquisite Cook, or Butcher was not by his Readiness in those Arts made a Priest ; that as the Soldier and Lawyer must have a Commission from their Prince, before they can safely pretend to the Character of a General, or Judge ; so the Cook, or Butcher, *must be called of God, as was Aaron*, before he could offer Sacrifice in an acceptable Manner, and for the same Reason the most holy learned, eloquent *Christian* in the World is not by these excellent Qualities empower'd to preach, or administer Sacraments : Holiness, Learning, and Eloquence are indeed excellent Qualifications for the Ministry, but they do not give a Man Commission, and therefore are not
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of themselves sufficient to entitle a Man to exercise the sacred Function.

2. I am to shew, how, or by what means God calls Men to the Ministry, and there are two Methods used by God in this particular.

(1.) The first is Extraordinary, I mean that whereby *Jesus Christ* as Man, and his Apostles, and LXX were authoriz'd to act as publick, authentick Teachers of Religion. *Jesus Christ* was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power, to his sacred Office, so were the Apostles, and others in that Age: they preached in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, 1 Cor. ii. 4. that is, they confirm'd the Truth of what they said by doing Miracles, and by this means proved, that they, and their Doctrine were from God. If any Man in this Age pretend to this extraordinary Call he ought soundly to prove it, as the Apostles did, by curing the Sick, casting out Devils, raising the Dead, speaking in Languages they never learn'd.

(2.) There is an ordinary stated Method, whereby God has called Labourers into his Vineyard, in all Ages since this was first fix'd by the Apostles, and has ever since been observed in the Church: I mean by the laying on of Hands of the chief Pastors of the Church. As any one Bishop, such as *Timothy* and *Titus*, was able to ordain

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tain inferiour Ministers; so Bishops themselves were ordained by a good number of those of the same Order. *Titus* had of himself Power to ordain Elders in every City, but *Timothy* was ordained to the Office of a Bishop not only by *St. Paul*, but by the *Presbytery*, that is, by an Assembly of the neighbouring Bishops, for I think it is allowed on all Hands, that what we now call Bishops, and Priests, did in the Apostles Days pass under the same Title, and were sometimes called Priests, or Elders, sometimes Bishops, tho' there was a real Distinction of Degree and Order; I mean that *Timothy* and *Titus* had Authority over all the Priests, or Elders in *Ephesus*, or *Crete*, tho' they themselves too might be, and probably often were styled *ὑποπρεσβύτεροι* *Presbyters*, of which the English *Priest* is a Construction; and this way of speaking continued to the end of the second Century: 'tis used by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, who flourished 190 Years after Christ, by *Tertullian*, who lived in the same Age with him, and by *Irenaeus*, who was a little before them both: Even then Bishops were often call'd *Presbyters*, tho' the hardest Disputant cannot but grant, that the Distinction of Orders was very clear and plain in that Age. We shall the less wonder at this, when we consider, that *Aaron* is not above twice, or thrice, call'd *High-Priest*

Priest in all the Writings of *Moses*, but generally passes under the name of Priest; tho' there needs no Proof, that he had a great Superiority over the whole sacred Tribe. This Method of calling Men to the Ministerial Office may be justly said to be establish'd by God, because it was first instituted by the Apostles, who gave sufficient Proof by the Miracles they wrought of the Divine Authority they had for that purpose: this was continued in the Church in the purest, and most primitive Times, while the Power of working Miracles did not cease, that is, for 200 Years after *Christ*: They knew no other way of being commission'd Officers in God's Harvest, but by the Imposition of the Bishops Hands. As the budding of *Aaron's* Rod was judged a sufficient Proof that not only he was chosen of God, but all his Posterity; so the Miracles done by the Apostles, and other first Ministers of *Christ*, was thought a convincing Testimony, that not only themselves, but all that should in future Ages succeed them in a Regular Course, had the same Commission from God, for all Transactions between him, and his Church. In a Word, this was the only known Method, whereby Men could be authentick Officers in the Church of God, in all the following Ages of *Christianity*: The Persons to be ordained were sometimes nominated

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nated by the People, sometimes by the Clergy, sometimes by both ; at other times the Bishops, or Bishop, who perform'd the Office of Ordination, acted without the Consent of any other Persons. In latter Ages first the Pope, the grand Usurper, wrested it from Clergy and People, and then the temporal Princes claim'd the Power of Nominating them that were to be ordained Bishops ; so that in this Point there has been very great Variation. But as to the Ordination itself, the granting the Commission, this was ever acknowledged to be in the Bishops only, and that in this they acted by a Power derived to them from the Apostles in a regular uninterrupted Succession : and I do in my Conscience believe, that there is at this Day no other way, or means, whereby Men can be call'd of God to work in the Spiritual Vineyard. No other Method was known in this Nation from the first planting of *Christianity* here till now of late Years : and whatever first began of late Years for that Reason cannot be of God : the second, much more the third, and fourth way of Commissioning Men to the Ministry, cannot be from the Fountain-head. In truth, it is impossible there can be any more than one true, divinely instituted Commission : for to suppose that there are two or more ways of being call'd to the

the Ministry, is to suppose, that *Christ* intended two or more Churches. Whenever any Body of Men pretend to a new second Authority of sending Preachers, or Ministers, in opposition to the first, it is evident this must be done in order to form a second Church; but there can be no second Church. *Christ* founded one, and there can be none other from him. Therefore all new ways of calling to the Ministry must be Inventions of Men. Great Pains has been taken by the chief Body of *Dissenters* from the Church of *England*, to prove that not only Bishops, but Priests, or Presbyters, have the Power of Ordaining. I am far from thinking, that they have made good their point: but let it be supposed, that in cases of Necessity, Presbyters have Power to ordain other Ministers; it is certain that even Bishops themselves have not power to ordain in opposition to the Church, to the main Body of their Brethren, in order to erect a second Church, and in Contradiction to Peace and Truth: all such Ordinations must be null, till it can be proved, that *Christ* designed two or more Churches, and therefore made two or more several Centers of Authority for ordaining Pastors: Nothing could justify Presbyters in setting up a new Ministry in direct Opposition to the first, even tho' they be granted to have this

Power,

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unto themselves Teachers, to gratify their own itching Ears, that they take care not to multiply Masters, and Teachers, and idolize them, for being of their own Making; but rather esteem those that are sent of God in a regular Method of Succession.

It cannot be deny'd, that an inward Call is necessary as well as an outward, I mean, that they who offer themselves to be ordained to the Ministry, should act in this Respect out of a sincere Desire, and an earnest Disposition to promote the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls; and it is the *Holy Spirit*, who excites such good Desires and Dispositions in us: and he that takes on him the sacred Office without this View and Design, has a very severe Account to give to him that judgeth righteously. But it is a great Mistake to suppose, that the inward Call is sufficient without a Commission from God, which may be shew'd, and proved to others: and this must be done, either by performing miraculous Works, or by a Testimony of our being sent by those whom God hath placed in the Church for this Purpose. If the inward Call were sufficient, there would be no End of Delusions: there wou'd be as many Pretenders to the Ministry as there are crazy Brains, or designing Heads in a Nation. When therefore I say, that

SER. M. VI. that this inward Call is necessary, I mean, that he who goes into the Ministry without it, is guilty of a great Sin. I don't mean it is necessary in respect to the People, for if *Christians* could not safely receive the Word, or Sacraments, from one that had not this inward Call, it is evident they must for ever forbear, and wholly abstain from the Ordinances of God : For he who has this inward Call, can never prove it to others, they must take his own Word for it, and they who have it not may make as large Pretences to it, as they who have it in never so great Perfection : Therefore tho' every one, who presumes to enter into the Ministry, ought to be well satisfy'd in his own Mind, that he has these pious honest Intentions in his Heart, yet no private *Christian* ought to raise scruples in his own Breast concerning the inward Call of his Pastors : For that is what 'tis impossible for him to know ; therefore he ought to be content with this, that his Minister has all that Authority to perform his Office, that can be discern'd by humane Eyes, or certainly be known by Men of the greatest Penetration.

But is it not very sad, that any Men should dare presume to take on them the Ministerial Character without this inward Call ? I answer, it certainly is so ; but then it hurts none, but him that is guilty of it :
It

It is inconsistent with the Goodness of God to Punish the People for the Sins or Defects of the Priest. The Word and the Ordinance of God cannot be defiled by the Hypocrisy of Men. It is very deplorable, that any vicious Man should be admitted to the Priesthood; and it ought to be the Care of the Governours of the Church, that they do not partake of other Mens Sin by laying Hands hastily on those who offer themselves; and that they who have disgrac'd their Profession by any notorious Crime, be for the future driven from the sacred Function. Yet it is never to be expected, that the Church shou'd be without Spots of this Sort: and no serious *Christian* ought to move any doubts in his own Mind concerning the Validity of such Mens Ministrations, so long as they are permitted to officiate. For it was said of *Judas*, as well as of the other Eleven, *he that heareth you, heareth me*: they who came to *Christ* at his Call, were as effectually Converted, as if *St. Peter*, or *St. John*, had been the Persons who deliver'd the Invitation, the blessed Message of a Redeemer to them: We read *John* iv. 1, 2. *Jesus baptized more Disciples, then John, tho' Jesus himself baptized not, but his Disciples.* *Judas* was one of those Disciples, they therefore that were baptized by him, were baptized by *Christ*; who administer'd

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administer'd that Sacrament by their Hands. The Case is the same now. *Christ* administers the Sacraments to his Church and People: the Ministers are only Instruments used by him to perform the outward Operation. Our High-Priest, who is in Heaven, supplies all the Defects of those, who with great Mixture of Infirmary minister in holy Things.

IV. I am to shew the great Reason, that all *Christians* have heartily to pray to God, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest, and that

1. On the Account of the very great Usefulness of these Labourers.

2. On Account of the great Discouragements, under which they lie.

1. On the Account of the very great Usefulness of these Labourers, and

(1.) All that have a true value for God's Word and Sacraments, and the Publick Worship, cannot but earnestly desire the Continuance of these Blessings to themselves, and their Posterity, and that sacred Offices may be perform'd by such as are call'd by God to this Function; that holy Things may not be vilify'd, and grow into Disesteem, or rather, be quite annulled, and become Names and Shadows only, as they must, if ever God should cease to call Men in to his Vineyard to dress and keep it.

Primitive



(2.) All that are well affected to divine Truth, that desire to have our common Primitive Faith guarded against the Assaults and bold Inventions of Innovators, against the gross Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, and the fond Conceits of Ignorant deluded Enthusiasts, have just cause earnestly to wish and pray, that there may be never wanting a sufficient Number of Men to supply the Mortality of those, who now stand before God, and minister in holy Things. If you will make it your business to enquire by whose Pains and Labours our Faith has been Defended against *Hereticks*, *Papists*, and *Deists*, and *Atheists*, you will find, that very little has been done by other Hands, but those of the Clergy: and there is just Cause to apprehend, that, if the Succession of the present Priesthood in *England* should fail, the whole Nation would soon be over-run with wild Notions, and old or new Heresies; with *Popery*, or *Antichristianism*; that the Nation would become a *Babel*, a Heap of Independency and Confusion. The Church and Clergy have great Numbers of Enemies. These all agree in using their Power, to pull down the present Constitution, but it is scarce credible, that they will ever agree in building any Thing up in its Stead: it may easily be believ'd, that they will consent to



divide the Lands, and the Tithes that belong to the Church among themselves; but it can scarce be conceived, that they will ever yield these Endowments for the Maintenance of any other Sort of Teachers: In a Word, I can see no Probability of any Thing, but a Chaos and a Medly of Errour, Distraction, and endless Debates in Religion, if God in his just Judgments should permit the present Church and Clergy to be subverted and ruin'd. There are no doubt many Faults to be seen in the Clergy; and do you expect a Clergy without any? No Man can be so extravagantly Foolish. The Truth is, the most remarkable Enemies of the Clergy can upon Occasion shew a very distinguishing Inclination, and Fondness for one of the holy Order, that has sullied his Character by Vice and Immorality, by Sloth and Neglect of his proper Business, so he be one that can bear with their Looseness in Principle and Practice; that can indulge them in their Irregularities; that can stifle Truth to serve a turn; or that can speak unto them smooth Things, and prophesy Deceits. And who would be so desperately an Enemy to Religion, as to hate Priests, if he could manage and govern them at Discretion, and make them speak or hold their Peace, at their Direction? Such Priests as these may best serve the Ends of designing Politicians.

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Politicians ; but they only can do Honour to God, and promote the Interest of Religion, who dare maintain a deserted Truth, and who endeavour to gain Converts to true Primitive *Apostolical Christianity*, rather than to any new fond Devices of modern Ages. Such Labourers as these we are to pray that God would send into his Harvest, and there is great Reason, that we should be very earnest in our Petitions, if we consider,

2. The great Discouragements, under which such Labourers live. What Man that is wordly wise would educate his Son to a Profession, which if he discharge as he in Duty ought, he shall be sure to be repaid with Ill-will and Hatred, with Reproach and Insults, and very probably with Poverty and Want ? What Man in the prime of his Age, that has his Profession to chuse, and is willing to take such a Course as may be for the Ease and Comfort of his own Life, and of his future Family, would ingage himself in an Employ, which if he faithfully pursue, he is sure to provoke such as are able to oppress him ; and if by his honest Fidelity he gain such a Reward as he deserves, yet his Tenure is precarious and uncertain, and he is sure of nothing but Envy and Contempt, from them whom he must displease, if he will be true to his own Principles ?

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He indeed, that enters into Orders with worldly Views only, and proposes to himself nothing but the Advancement of his Fortunes, and therefore resolves to sail with every Wind, to bend at every Nod of those who can pay him well for his Obsequiousness, he may indeed by this means promote his own temporal Interests, and others too at the same Time; but these are not the Labourers that *Christ* requires: they may indeed be good Harvesters in regard to the concerns of their Families, but what they reap is for themselves, not for *Christ*, or his Church. It is evident therefore, that they only can by their Ministry be truly instrumental to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men, and the Honour of Religion, who when they take on them the sacred Character, do it chiefly with a view to the Things that are not seen, who so govern themselves in the Discharge of their Duty, as to shew, that they expect not their Reward in this Life, or however, who have their Eye chiefly fix'd on something beyond the Grave; and therefore are ready to follow their Blessed Master through Honour and Dishonour, through evil Report and good Report, as Deceivers, and yet true. It is evident, to this Purpose the special Grace of God and his holy Spirit is necessary in a high Degree: For this Reason the Church directs

rects us at the four Seasons of the Year call'd *Ember Weeks*, which are appointed for the admitting Men into holy Orders, to pray to God every Day in the Week for the good Success of this great Work, on which the Prosperity of the Church, the true Interest of Religion, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men does so greatly depend.

I have only one Thing more to add, which is, that we are to pray for the Pastors, and Ministers of the Church, after their Ordination, as well as before and upon it. *Christ* has given us an Example of this sort, who never did here upon Earth, so far as appears, offer a more solemn and devout Request to God, than in behalf of his Apostles, *John* xvii. 6--20. He promised *St. Peter*, that he would pray for him that his Faith might not fail; and he gives us a very strong Reason why our Petitions for the Bishops and Clergy should be offer'd with a particular Degree of Zeal and Fervency, viz. *Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee like Wheat.* The Devil does particularly exercise his Spite and Craft against them, as knowing, that by prevailing against one of the sacred Ministry he is the more capable of Seducing others. *St. Paul* commonly asks the Prayer of the People to whom he writes; and it has been the con-

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stant Practice of the Church, as it is of ours, to pray for all Bishops and Pastors: and I wish that Men would do this with great Earnestness, and Intenseness of Devotion, as for other Reasons; so especially for this, because I am persuaded, that if People did with Seriousness, and Sincerity, pray for their Pastors and Ministers as often as they met in the publick Assembly, this would be one means to dispose, and incline them to be truly well affected towards them. The Church particularly instructs us all to pray, that Bishops and Curates may truly set forth God's Word, and rightly and duly administer his holy Sacraments. But in vain do we do our parts, except the People too perform theirs, in vain I mean, as to those who either neglect, or abuse their Ministrations: For the Ministers themselves shall receive the Rewards of their faithful Labours. But they will have a bad Account to give of themselves, who are deaf to their Admonitions, or who rent and worry them that offer them these heavenly Pearls; from which unchristian Temper of Mind, God deliver every one here present.

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SERMON VII.

Of the Religion of Times and Places.

LEVIT. XIX. 30.

*Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence
my Sanctuary. I am the Lord.*

IN this Place, and again, Ch. xxvi. 2. SERMON VII.
the People of *Israel* are commanded
by Almighty God in the same short Law
to pay a just Regard to holy Times, and
to holy Places, the Sanctuary, or *Sanctuaries*
in the plural Number (for so the
Greek Translators understood it). From
hence then I shall take Occasion

To shew that the Religion of Times,
and Places is built upon the same Founda-
tion, or that the observing God's Sab-
baths, and reverencing his Sanctuaries, are
Duties grounded on the same Bottom;
which I shall do in this Method,

X 4

I. I shall



- I. I shall shew, That the Reasons for separating Time and Place, are the same.
- II. That the same Religious Regard is due to Times and Places so separated.
- III. That the Objections against separating Time, and separating Place, for Religious Purposes, are the same, and are confuted by the same Answers.

I. The Reasons for separating Time and Place for Religious Uses are the same : and these Reasons may all be reduced to one, that is, the Honour of God's Name. It is true God may be Honoured in every Time, and in every Place ; but even natural Reason, and Sense, have directed the main Body of Mankind to have some Times and Places distinguish'd from the rest, and in a peculiar manner Dedicated to Religious Uses ; There is nothing that can be done by us, but in a certain Time and Place. All more considerable momentous Actions, especially if they are Publick, have particular Times and Places allotted for them. It is therefore most fitting and agreeable, that those Actions which are most solemn and momentous of all others should have some fix'd Times and Places universally known by all that are concern'd to perform them. Now the most concerning and weighty Business of our Lives is the Service and Worship of God ; and tho' this may be done privately in any Time, or Place ;



Place; yet it cannot be done publickly, and in Conjunction with others, but by having some certain determin'd Time and Place laid out and assigned for this Purpose, and sufficiently notified to all that are to join in it. As necessary therefore as it is, that God should be Worship'd in Publick, by numerous Bodies of Men assembled together for this End, so necessary is it, that there should be proper Times and Places set apart for this Purpose.

You may observe, that I now argue from natural Reason only, from those Principles in which all considering Men and Nations are universally agreed, and in which there can be no Difference among the civilized Part of Mankind. It is a principle granted by all judicious *Christians*, that our Saviour never intended to abrogate, or annul any Law of Nature, but rather to confirm and inforce it. And if there be any Law of Nature, this is one, that divine Worship is to be performed in Publick, as well as Private, and that therefore peculiar Times and Places are to be provided for it.

Though certain Time and Place be necessary Points of God's Worship, yet it seems more easy to natural Reason to assign or determine the Place, than the Time: for every One's common Sense would suggest to him that as to the Place, it is sufficient,

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cient, that it be the most Convenient to be resorted to by All that are to worship there, and that it be large enough easily to receive such as resort to it, and for the solemn Performance of the Services there to be done. But natural Reason does not so clearly direct us to any certain Period of Time for publick Assemblies. There are three natural Periods of Time, the Day, (24 Hours, whereof one Part is Light-some, the other Dark) the Month, which is measured out to us by the Course of the Moon; the Year, in which the Sun performs his Circuit. If therefore Nature direct us to any particular Season, it must be either every Day: and if every Day were to be spent in divine Worship, we should have none left for other necessary Business; or else some part of every Day: and this too would be impracticable; unless it could be supposed, that all that were concern'd in the publick Worship lived so near to the place of Assembly, that they could every Day attend it without any notable Damage to their other Affairs: or else it must be once a Month, or once a Year; and this will be allowed by all to be too seldom. If indeed a Week were a natural Period of Time, it may be justly allow'd, that natural Reason would direct us to one Day in seven. But it is certain, that neither the
Sun

Sun nor the Moon does divide the Year SEEM. VII.
 into Weeks. It is well known that every Quarter of the Moon consists of somewhat more than seven Days; therefore none of the antient Heathen number'd their Time by Weeks, till some in after Ages had learn'd this from the Jews: Therefore the Proportion of one day in seven to be dedicated to the Service of God, could not be known by Reason, but must be wholly ascribed to *Revelation*, and the positive Institution of Almighty God. Whether God manifested this *Revelation* to *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*, or whether they ever observed one Day in seven, does not appear; nay in the whole Book of *Job*, there is not any intimation of it. That they observed Times and Places of Worship there could be no doubt; natural Reason directed them to this; but we have no Grounds to believe, that they kept a seventh Day Sabbath. It is certain that God blessed the seventh Day, and Sanctified it from the Beginning, because on that Day God rested from all the Works that he had made. *Gen. ii. 3.* I mean, it is certain that God did then, in his own Mind and Intention, design that Day for Religious Uses to his People *Israel*: but whether ever God did reveal this Intention of his to any before *Moses* is not clear, and some of the most judicious Divines assert that he did not.
 However,

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SER. M. However, this I think is so, that tho' natural Reason direct Men to allot some certain space of Time for the immediate Service of God; yet how much that shall be, cannot be determined by any Light that Nature gives us, but must be taught by divine *Revelation*. And if God had never made any *Revelation*, it must have been determin'd by common Consent, or by the supreme Authority of every Nation. Upon the whole, it is sufficiently evident that the separating of special Times and Places for Religious Service is grounded upon the same Foundation, which is, the Necessity of publick Worship: and therefore the Light of Nature does evidently direct us to both; tho' it is not so clear what certain Proportion of our Time we are to dedicate to God, as it is, that the Place, which is most convenient for the generality of the Worshipers should be chosen; and that it should be sufficiently large for those who are to resort to it.

II. I am to shew, That the same Sort of Regard is due to Times and Places, so separated for the Service of God.

I. And here the first Point to be consider'd is, in what degree of Duty and Obligation we are to place the providing, and using fit Times and Places for publick Worship. That you may the better understand me, I must remind you of a Distinction

distinction which I have often made of the SERM.
Duties of Religion, namely, that some of VII.
them are Final, some Instrumental only. Final Duties of Religion are by much the greatest, and most valuable; they are the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, Temperance, Humility, and the like: these are Duties of absolute perpetual Obligation, without which 'tis impossible for a Man to be saved in another World; they are Duties that may, and must be practis'd at all Times, and in all Places; they are such Dispositions of Mind, without which no Man can be well pleasing to God; they are not only necessary in this World, but also in the World to come. For if it could be supposed that a Man could enter into Heaven, without a sincere Love to God and Man, without a Love of Temperance, or with a proud and haughty Mind, it is certain Heaven would not be a Place of Happiness to him; there can be no Injoyments there but for pure and holy Souls that love their Maker and their Fellow Creatures; not for such as have a hankering after sordid Pleasures, or Souls swoln with Pride, or Envy, or such like diabolical Passions: These Duties are to be learn'd, and practis'd for their own Sakes, and are the chief Perfection of humane Souls; and therefore are called final Duties, or Duties of the End. There are other Duties, that
are

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are only Instrumental ; such are Fasting, Reading, Self-examination, the publick Worship of God, and setting apart proper Times, or Places, and using of them to that Purpose : These are Duties only in order to the improving and promoting ourselves in the Practice of those other greater and weightier Matters of the Law and Gospel, and to be learn'd, and exercised for the Sake of them, which are the most excellent Virtues of Religion. For the End of all outward Exercise of the Instrumental Duties is to raise our Love to God, and our Neighbours, and to bring us to the Practice of Sobriety, Meekness, and such like divine Graces ; therefore we are to Read, and keep the Lord's Day, and go to Church, that we may by these means graft in our Hearts, and train and discipline ourselves in those Duties, which I just now mention'd, and which are the most exalted Parts of Virtue and Religion, and which crown all our other Performances. A Man may be very acceptable in God's Sight, and be very dear to him, tho' he be in a State of Captivity, and so as that he can neither observe a Day unto the Lord through the Tyranny of those under whose Power he is, as if they be *Turks*, or *Heathens* ; nor have any Place of Worship, to which he may resort. But no Man can have any just grounds to hope for

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for Acceptance with God, who has not a prevailing Love toward him, and a sincere Affection, and Good-will toward all Men; and in a Word, who does not to the best of his Power lead a Sober, Righteous, and godly Life: nay it is certain, that God loaths the outward Worship and Service of those Men, who so are void of true moral Goodness: To such he says by his Prophet *Isaiab, Ch. i. 12, 13, 14. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your Hands to tread my Courts? Your new Moons, and Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with, it is Iniquity, even your solemn Meeting.*

God is the Standard of all Excellence and Perfection, and those Virtues and Graces in which we resemble, or imitate him, are certainly the most of all to be esteem'd and valu'd. But now the Graces in which we do come nearest to that Pattern which he sets us, are holy Love; for God is Love, Justice, Purity from all filthy Pleasures: therefore there is no Room to doubt, but that these Graces are in themselves most excellent, and most pleasing to him. On the other side, God's Goodness does not consist in separating Days and Places, for conferring his Benefits on his Creatures; he exercises all his divine Attributes without any Intermision of Time,
or

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or Exception of Place : He is the same God *from Everlasting to Everlasting*, he sheds his Beneficence and Mercy on all the most distant Regions of the Universe: His Goodness knows no Bounds. And the Reason, why we are obliged to observe certain Times and Places more than others, arises from the present Imperfection of our Natures, *viz.* because we cannot always, every Day and Hour, attend the immediate Service of God, and because we cannot be together in any one Place to serve our Creator with Unity of Heart and Voice, but by having certain Places separated for that Use. And certainly those Virtues and Duties, which arise from the Defects and Weakness of our Natures, are not to be esteem'd the greatest ; but such wherein we are Partakers of the divine Nature.

It may indeed be said, that the *Jews* by observing the seventh Day did follow the Example of God, who is said to have created all the universe in six Days, and to have rested, or ceased from all his Works on the seventh Day. But then it is observable, that this was only imitating God in a mere Negative, not in doing good, but in ceasing to work : Then we do in the most commendable Manner follow the Example of God, when we follow him in his Works, his positive Works of Mercy ;
then

then we are to use our Saviour's own Expression, *perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. But to imitate him in Cessation only is not to imitate his Perfections; is not in itself any Excellence. It was indeed a Duty to the *Jews*, because God made it so, by his express Will and Command; but it is not so to us, who are in a State of much greater Perfection than the *Jews* were. We do not observe the Seventh Day, wherein God ceased from his Works; but the First Day, in which he began them. For it is no manner of Excellence to resemble God once a Week in that which he once did, that is, in ceasing from the Works of Creation; only as it was the Will of God, that for the more effectual Remembrance of his being the Maker of all Things, the *Jews* should rest on the Seventh Day in order to contemplate the Works of the Creation, and do Honour to their Creator. And tho' God on the seventh Day ceased from making the World; yet he never ceased from his Works of Providence. And this is what our Saviour tells us, when he was impeach'd by the Superstitious *Jews*, for having cured an impotent Man on the Sabbath Day, and made him take up his Bed, and walk: for to all their Objections he gives this Remarkable and most effectual Answer, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work*, John v. 17.

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as if he had said, "Do not value your-
selves for being so precise in observing
an outward Cessation from bodily Work
on the Sabbath Day. For tho' it is true,
God, having made an End of Creating
the Universe on this Day, commanded
your Forefathers, and you, to abstain
from Work, in Remembrance of what
he had done ; yet do not imagine, that
there is any real Excellence in this Cessa-
tion in itself consider'd. For, by doing
good on this Day, you may more perfect-
ly imitate him, than by sitting still, and
doing nothing : and tho' God rested on
the seventh Day from the Works of Cre-
ation, yet he never ceases, more than
I do, to perform his Works of Provi-
dence and Mercy to his Creatures. And
it is much more agreeable to his Will,
that we should at all Times and Places do
all the good we can, tho' the doing of
it be attended with some bodily La-
bour, than, by barely doing nothing
at all, to imitate his Cessation." There-
fore it is true, in this as well as in other
Respects, that the Law made nothing per-
fect. *Heb. vii. 19.* for I suppose no Man
can doubt which of the two is most
perfect, *viz.* To cease from doing any
outward Work, or to take all possible Op-
portunities of Labouring in our Duty, in
Season, and out of Season.

It

It is an Aphorism left us by the Prophet **HOSEA**, and to which our Saviour has added the Stamp of his own divine Authority, that *Mercy is better than Sacrifice*: and I suppose no one can doubt, but the Sabbath, and all the Services and Devotions ever perform'd in it, are part of the Law of Sacrifice; and therefore of less value in the Sight of God, and all judicious Men, than Charity, which is indeed the Perfection of the Law and Gospel. And if Mercy, or the Love of Men, is to be prefer'd to the Observation of the Sabbath, or of the Sanctuary, (for what is said of one must in this Case be understood of both) then we may with greater Reason assert, that the Love of God is still by many Degrees to be placed above the Observation of Times and Places: I mean, when these two Duties are consider'd as distinct, or separate from each other. For, if we keep God's Sabbaths, and reverence his Sanctuaries, out of a Principle of sincere Love to God, then 'tis evident, that the Honour we pay God's Day, and God's House, is only a Branch or Product of our Love to God, and, on that Account preferable to the Love of Man, and all other Duty, or at least equal to it; as it is in those Men, who do all their good Deeds out of that most noble Principle the Love of God. 'Tis true indeed, that a necessary

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Work

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SERM. Work of Mercy to our Neighbour must be
VII. done rather than an Act of Devotion to God
 himself, when we can't perform both; but I take the Reason of this to be, that our Devotion to God may be perform'd at another Time, whereas our Neighbour may perish, or be greatly dainag'd, if we do not out of hand yield him our Assistance: the Reason of it cannot be that it is in itself more Excellent to serve Man, than to serve God: for the Service of God is certainly the most important Business, in itself consider'd, that Man is capable of performing, and paying a due Regard to Times and Places set apart for this Purpose, is a most important part of this Service.

But it deserves further to be consider'd, because some have asserted it, that the Observation of holy Times and Places, even when it does flow from the best Principle, the true Love of God and Honour of the divine Majesty, is only a Duty of this Life. For when we arrive in the other World there shall be no Sabbath, no particular Time allow'd for the peculiar Service of God; for all Eternity shall be spent in this blessed Work. There shall be no Temple (for *Rev. xxi. 27.* is commonly taken to be meant of the Heavenly State) for there shall be no Occasion for any; because all those blessed Regions, and the Inhabitants of them, are fitted for
 the

the constant Employ of serving and praising God. And the true Meaning of this SERM. VII. is, that in Heaven there is a perpetual Sabbath, one continued endless Rest for the People of God ; and the whole Heaven of the Blessed is but one Temple, in which happy Spirits are perpetually paying their Homage and Worship to the King of Saints : And this I take to be no Diminution to the Duty of keeping God's Sabbaths, and reverencing his Sanctuaries ; it only shews, that it shall be performed with greater Perfection in another World, than it can be here ; that all their Time shall be one Sabbath ; that the whole Place wherein they shall dwell will be but one Sanctuary, which shall for ever be put to its proper Use. I know some speak of the Duties of which I am now treating in a lessening Strain, because this Distinction of Days and Places shall cease in the other and the better World ; but I see no just Cause for it. We are sure that, in that perfect happy Life, Faith shall no longer be a Grace ; because it shall be swallow'd up in Enjoyment : and yet Faith is certainly a most necessary and principal Duty of Religion. We are sure there can in the other World be no such Thing as Martyrdom, or suffering Death for Religion ; because the Saints once raised can die no more, and there are no persecuting Tyrants

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SERM. to put Men to Death, if they were capable
VII. of Dying : and yet I conceive Martyrdom
 is the highest Pitch of *Christian* Perfection
 at which a Man can arrive in this Life.
 It is therefore no Disparagement to the Du-
 ty of observing particular Times and Pla-
 ces, set apart for Religion, that they shall
 cease, and be no more, in the State of per-
 fect Happiness ; for so too shall Faith, and
 Martyrdom.

Thus it appears in what Degree of Du-
 ty, and Obligation, we are to place the
 keeping of God's Sabbath, and reverencing
 his Sanctuaries, *viz.* That it is not a Fi-
 nal, but only an Instrumental Duty of our
 Religion, not to be done for its own Sake,
 but for the Promoting and Advancing the
 greater, and more weighty Matters of Love
 to God and Man, &c. That these are
 none of those Duties, in which we imitate
 the Perfections of God, and which are there-
 fore thought the most Excellent : That
 the Observation due to Time and Place,
 must give way to Mercy and Charity to
 our Neighbours ; and yet if it do indeed
 flow from our Love to God, then it is a
 Virtue of the same Nature with our Love
 to Man, and at least equal to it. If we
 will not allow it to be a Duty of an Eter-
 nal Nature and Obligation, and to be
 practis'd in another Life, as the Love of
 God and our Neighbour certainly shall,
 yet

yet it is not to be under-valu'd on this Account : for the same may be said of Faith, and Martyrdom itself, which yet are principal Duties, the one most necessary, the other the most ornamental Grace, and of the greatest Esteem in the Sight of God. SERM.
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2. Another Instance of our Regard to holy Times and Places is, that neither of them be imploy'd for worldly Labour and Business, except what is absolutely necessary, and unavoidable without great Damage and Inconvenience. I am very far from thinking, that *Christians* are under the same Yoke of Bondage that the *Jews* were, in Relation to their Sabbath, so that no Man might move out of his Place, or kindle a Fire on the seventh Day. It is certain the *Jewish* Sabbath is abolish'd, and all the violent Severities which God enjoined that People; yet the wisest Kings and Church Governours, in this and other Countries, have in all Ages past restrain'd Men from following their common Labours and Business on the Lord's Day. Our antient *English* and *Danish* Kings forbad all Marketings, and holding of Courts, all carrying of Burdens, and all unnecessary Work whatsoever, not only on the Day itself, but from three a Clock on *Saturday* after noon, till the Rising of the Sun on *Monday* Morning. And *Wiked* a Religious King of *Kent*, about 700 Years

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after

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after *Christ*, made a Law still extant, that if a Master set his Servant to work within this space of Time, he should forfeit LXXX Shillings, a very great Sum of Money at that Time; and if a Servant wrought without his Master's Order, he should be scourg'd, or pay 6 *d.* For they considered the Lord's Day not only as a Time of publick Worship, but also as a proper Relaxation of Labour to them that had worked the six Days foregoing: and our Laws still in Force do prohibit all manner of Traffick and Labour, excepting what concerns the Life of Man and Beast; and it must be own'd that these are pious Laws, made for the Advancement of the publick Worship of God, which would be less regarded than it is, if these wholesome Laws did not provide Time for all Persons of all Conditions to attend it. It were to be wish'd, they were better executed.

And that no worldly Business is to be transacted in Places set apart for Religion, our Saviour has left us a very strict Prohibition: *Make not my Father's House a House of Merchandise*, John ii. 16. Nay, he wou'd not permit any one to carry so much as a Vessel thro' the Temple, *Mark xi. 16.* And indeed it is very observable, that our Saviour did twice in the Course of his Ministry most vigorously exert his Zeal, and divine Power, in vindicating the Honour

Honour of God's House; once in the beginning of his Prophetick Office, which is related *John* ii. 14. and about 3 Years after, just before his Death, which is recorded by the other three Evangelists, *Mat.* xxi. 12. *Mark* xi. 11. *Luke* xix. 45. And this is the more observable, because this same Lord of ours is never related to have said or done any Thing, during the whole Time of his abode here on Earth, whereby to inforce the Observation of the Sabbath: and this may at first Sight seem to invalidate my former Assertion, *viz.* That the Observation of Times stands on the same Foot and Basis, with the Observation of Places dedicated to the Service of God. For by this it should appear, that *Jesus Christ*, whose Doctrine, and Example, is to be the Direction of our Lives, had a much greater Concern for holy Places, than for holy Times. For it is clear, he twice, in a very evident and remarkable Manner, asserted the Honour and Dignity of the Temple, never of the Sabbath. But the Answer to this is not difficult, *viz.* that there was no Occasion for our Saviour to shew his Care and Zeal for the Sabbath: for in this point the *Jews* were only too strict and rigid. We do every now and then find, that their Indignation was raised against our Saviour, for not coming up to their Heights and Excesses; they take

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take up, and correct *Christ Jesus*, even for doing good on the Sabbath : there could be no Reason, why our Blessed Master should use any Incitements, or Incentives, to them who wanted a Curb, rather than a Goad, as to this Point. But on the other side, they were most notoriously careless, as to the Respect due to the Temple ; they had made a Market, a Fair, or Exchange, they had converted that holy Place, which was erected for Sacrifice, Prayer, and Devotion, a Place of Trade, and of secular Transactions, the Place of which God had said, *This shall be my resting Place* (*Chr. xxxii. 14.*) into a Rendezvous of Chapmen and Money-Changers ; and this provok'd the Zeal of the Holy *Jesus* to the Height ; and has thereby left an Example to his People in all succeeding Ages, of using the Authority and Power they have, in driving all such Profaners from holy Ground, from Places separated for the Honour of God, and Service of Religion. In Conformity to this, the Primitive *Christians* did not only build Places of Worship as ample, and magnificent, as their Condition would allow, but they guarded them from all wordly and common Uses, they would not permit them to be used as Dwelling-Houses. When Emperors and Kings became *Christians*, they raised more noble Structures for the Service

vice of God, and *Christ Jesus*; and it SERM. VII.
 would be endless to recount to you the
 Canons and Laws that were made in the
 best Ages of the Church, against using the
 Places assigned for the Worship of God to
 any common secular Employment: Even
Emperors, in the best and most pious Times,
 when they enter'd into the Doors of the
 Church, left their Crowns, and Arms, and
 Guards behind them; to shew, that even
 commendable Cares of civil Government,
 and worldly Matters, and especially the
 military Pomp, were not thought fit Atten-
 dants on Religious Worship. And even in
 after more degenerate Ages, yet the keep-
 ing of the Courts, or Fairs, within the
 Church, or the Verge of it, has been for-
 bidden by all Powers both Sacred and Ci-
 vil. And this is sufficient to shew, that sa-
 cred Times and Places are not to be em-
 ploy'd to worldly Labours, or secular Bu-
 siness.

3. Nor yet to Games and Pastimes.
 I know some very good and judicious Men
 have been for allowing Sports on the Lord's
 Day, after divine Service is over: But
 surely to go from Prayers and Sermon, to
 Play and Pastime, has something so dis-
 agreeable and inconsistent in it, that the
 very Thoughts of it are shocking. Few
 sober considering zealous *Christians* can ap-
 prove of it, even tho' out of Lenity, and
 an

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an immoderate Easiness of Temper, they connive at it in others. It is certainly most fit, and commendable, on the Holy-Day to be engaged in Holy Business, to preserve such a Gravity and Seriousness of Mind, as best comports with that most weighty Business, which is on that Day to be transacted between God and our Souls. You have been shew'd that the Duty of Observing holy Times is only Instrumental, that is, it is designed for some greater End than that of putting on our best Apparel, and barely going to Church, it is intended for the Improvement of our Souls in all of the most necessary and concerning Duties of Religion. But it's to be fear'd that this End will be defeated, if, when the publick Worship is ended, we give a Loose to our Thoughts, and Tongue, and Actions; and that all that we have done, and heard at Church, will make small Impression upon us, if we do not keep our Minds the rest of the Day in such a Frame and Composure, as best becomes zealous Worshipers, and fruitful Hearers; unless we endeavour to recollect, and treasure up in our Memories, such wholesome Doctrines and Admonitions as we have been taught, and cherish those good Tendencies and Inclinations, which the publick Worship of God, if seriously attended, will certainly raise in us,

As

As for the using of Plays and Games SERM. VII.
in Places set apart for Religion. I don't
Remember any Instance of it, except among
the *Heathens*, in the antient Times. There
is indeed no Prohibition of it in the Law
of *Moses*, nor the Gospel, because proba-
bly it was a Crime not known among the
Jews in those Ages; and the most proba-
ble Reason, why it was not forbidden, was
that there was no Occasion for it; for ill
Manners are the Cause of all prohibitive
Commandments. The Primitive *Christi-*
ans were a People too much in earnest in
their Religion, to turn their Churches into
Play-Houses; and therefore the antient Fa-
thers had no Reason to make Canons a-
gainst that, which was hitherto unheard
of. What looks most this way was the
prohibiting of keeping the Love-Feasts in
Churches. I have upon other Occasions
shew'd you, that these Feasts were observ'd
in Imitation of our Saviour's Supper, be-
fore his Instituting the blessed Sacrament:
and it is evident that the *Corinthians* had
these Feasts in the Church, just before the
Communion; and the Apostle reprehends
them for it, and asks them, *Have ye not*
Houses, &c.? or *Despise ye the Church*
of God? where he clearly distinguishes
Churches, or Religious Places, from com-
mon Houses, and intimates, that they
ought not to keep these Feasts in their
Places

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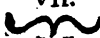
Places for Religious Assemblies, but in their own private Dwellings. In the best regulated Feasts some Indecencies will be committed; and so it happened in this Case. And the Council of *Laodicea*, for the same Reason banish'd these Love-Feasts from consecrated Places about 300 Years after: and in about 300 Years more they grew into Disuse. They were the corrupt and dark Ages of Popery, when Interludes and other Sports were first used in Churches; then Men under the pretence of Watching all Night over Dead Corpses, which were not yet Buried, but laid in the Church in Order to their Funeral, and in the mean Time to provoke People to pray for them; then, I say, many, under an appearance of Devotion in Praying for the Dead by Night, were guilty of the vilest Revels and Indecencies: It was then no uncommon Thing to have Farces acted in the Church, (and indeed some of these which they call Religious Offices are little better) but they had Comical Representations frequently shew'd in their Churches, particularly *Ludus Fatuorum* as they call'd it. They did, in imitation of Stage-players, act over all the most considerable Passages of our Saviour's Apprehension, Condemnation, and Crucifixion: he that acted the part of *Judas*, was the Fool in the Play. This indeed was so gross, that the

Ruling

Ruling part of that Church could not incommon Prudence countenance, or justify it; yet I have good Reason to believe that this was not wholly suppress'd till after the *Reformation*: and the same may be said of what were call'd *Scot-Ales*, and *Whis-sun-Ales*, which were in Truth merry Clubs; and Meetings held in the Church; and these began long before the Conquest, and were not wholly extinguish'd till it was done by our pious *Reformers*. But there is a certain Sport that has of late grown up, and which our *Reformation* is so far from having cured, that it every Day appears more impudent and bold. I mean, the making merry with the Service of the Church, and when Men have no other View in coming to Religious Assemblies, but only to spend their Buffoonry; by which the Day, the Place, and the Services, and religious Exercises there performed, are all at once profan'd,

4. Above all we must pay our Regard to holy Times and Places, by using our best Endeavours to preserve them from being profan'd by any Thing that is filthy and loathsom. Common Decency teaches Men, when they are to distinguish a Day and Place, especially a Day and Place appointed for Worship, to appear in a clean, if not in a comely Habit, or however in the Best they have. But I wish to God, that
a for,

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a fordid Coat, or a negligent Dress, were the greatest Instance of Profanation that we have to complain of, nay, I wish that some, on the contrary, did not give Reason to suspect, that they come rather to shew their fine Apparel, and good Breeding, than their Regard either to our holy Times, or Places, than to pay their Duties to God, and *Christ*.

But they are Profaners of the Lord's Day, who spend too great a Part of it in decking their Bodies: there may be indeed a great deal of Vanity in this; and they who are guilty ought to condemn themselves for shortning a Day set apart for better Exercises, by being more careful to make a good Figure in the Eyes of Men, than in preparing to make their Addresses to an Almighty God. And they are as much to blame, who lavish away too great a Part of the Day in any worldly Cares, or Provisions, even tho' they concern the Necessities of Life. It is true, the best *Christians* always observ'd this Day as a Feast, not as Fast; but still as a *Christian* Feast, not with a luxurious Table, and a needless Superfluity of Meats and Drinks, but with a decent, cheerful Competence; not such Entertainments as should require the Attendance of Servants through the whole Day; but such as was consistent with the Piety and Worship of Servants,
as

as well as of Masters. But the most abominable Profanation of the Lord's Day is the Spending of it in Whole, or in Part, upon our Vices : such who do this, act like our modern Jews of the looser Sort, who are said to pass the remaining Part of their Sabbath Days Rest, after their Synagogue Worship is done, with their Whores, or Concubines ; and it were well, if some went so far as they do : I mean, if they devoted any Part of the Day to the Service of God, and did not wholly spend it in indulging their own Lusts, or Vanities, or in Sloth and Idleness. All that come under this Head, do indeed double their Guilt, they add Sacrilege to all their other Sins ; they steal Time from the Service of God to spend upon their wicked Follies.

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And certainly as great a Care ought to be taken, that we do not defile the Sanctuary ; for it is the Declaration of an Apostle, that he who *defileth the Temple of God, him shall God destroy*. And certainly, whatever we esteem an Indecency in our own Houses is much more so in the House of God. In ancient Times People thought themselves oblig'd to pull their Shoes off their Feet, when they were to stand on Holy Ground : this is indeed a Ceremony now perfectly out of Use, and it would be ridiculous to use it : but

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surely

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surely People might be content to come with their Shoes only, and not arm their Shoes with Wood and Iron: Women should be the modest Sex; Which of them, that pretends to common Sense, or common Civility, would enter into a Gentleman's Parlour, in this noisy obstreperous Manner, shewing at once their Contempt of the holy Ground whereon they thus insolently tread, and of the Services there perform'd? I cannot but express my Wishes, that Women would learn to keep their Feet when they come into the House of God. If they have no Devotion of their own, I wish they would not disturb that of others. It is indeed very sad to consider, that the Generality of *Protestants*, who wou'd be thought to know Religion better than any other, do yet put no Difference between Holy and Prophane, and often are guilty of those indecent Gestures, Actions, and Behaviour in the Church, which they would be perfectly asham'd of in the House or Presence of any Man that was their Superior, or even their Equal. If Parents had any Notion of that Reverence due to sacred Places, and to the holy Offices there performed, they would instruct their Children better, and take more care of their Demeanour in the Place of Religious Assembly. I cannot but declare my Abhorrence of so much Rudeness and

and Insolence, as is every Lord's Day practised in our Church, and my Amazement to observe, that they who are themselves religiously inclin'd should express no Uneasiness at it, nor use any Endeavours for the Cure of it. Men may think it very hard to be told, that they know not what they do, or whither they are going, when they come to Church; but certainly he that knows that he is going into the House of God, will not think his Dog a fit Companion for him there: and when many are guilty of this Practice of bringing their Dogsto Church with them, and none shew any Zeal to have them driven out, it gives a plain Demonstration of our great Indifference in this Duty of paying due Reverence to God's Sanctuaries. And there is not a greater Proof of the poor narrow Thoughts, that the Generality of Men among us have of Religion, than this; that they who affect something of Decorum in their own Houses, yet grudge the least Expence for the beautifying the House of God, or preserving it from Profanations. It is evident there are too many, that are willing to have their own Houses ceiled, or lined with Cedar, but can, without any Impatience or Concern, see the House of God lie waste, as the Prophet, in an objuratory Strain, tells the Jews, *Haggai ii. 4.* Yet, to speak the Truth, *Papists* do much

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more

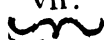
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more horribly defile the Places of their Worship, under pretence of paying a greater Respect to them. Their Churches are Sanctuaries in the more corrupt, and improper Sense. They are 1 mean Places of Refuge for the vilest Malefactors. Whatever Crimes, or Villainies, a Man commits, if he can set his Foot on holy Ground before he is apprehended, his Life is secured: so it was here in *England* while *Popery* prevail'd; nay, this Abuse was not wholly remitted before the Reign of King *James I.* Thus does the Church of *Rome* in a literal Sense make the House of God a Den of Thieves. But there is a more horrid Profanation of holy Places, of which that Church is guilty, I mean, in making them Dens of Idols, in filling them with the Images of the Saints, especially the blessed Virgin *Mary*, and of *Christ Jesus*; and, which is worse still, persuading the People to pay a Religious Honour or Veneration to them. And in the first point the *Lutherans*, who yet call themselves *Protestants*, do grossly imitate the *Papists*, I mean in decking their Churches with graven Figures, or molten Images, tho' they tell us, and we believe them, that they do it not to provoke the People to Worship them, but for Garnish and Ornament, and to give the People lively Memorandums of the Examples of the Saints

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Saints, and especially of *Christ Jesus*. I SERM.
sincerely profess my most earnest Wishes, VII.
that our Churches in *England* may never
be thus Adorned. For I look upon all
Images to be better Furniture for Houses,
and Gardens, and other places intended
for the Entertainments of our Curiosity,
or Pleasure, rather than of Edifices de-
sign'd for the Worship of an holy, jealous,
invisible Being.

5ly, and lastly, We ought to pay a just
Regard to consecrated Times and Places,
by putting them to the Use for which
they are design'd, that is, the Worship of
God. It will little avail us, that we have
our Notions concerning the Obligation
we are under to observe holy Times
and Places adjusted and rectified, if we
do not act according to those Regulations. If
we abstain only from bodily Labour on
God's-Day, we only keep the Sabbath of
the Ox and Ass, who rest as well as we.
Nay, if we come to Church on the Lord's
Day, but only to hear a Sermon, and not
devoutly to join in the publick Worship,
we do but justify the Reflection of the late
*French Satyr*ist, who speaking of the *English*
People says, that their Religion con-
sists in hearing Sermons, and sitting still
on *Sundays*. To what Purpose is it, that
Interludes, and Comedies, and Tragedies
are banish'd from the House of God, and
Z 3 prohibited

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prohibited on the Lords-Day, if we come to Church only to use an Hour in Diversion, and turn all Religious Exercises into a Jest and Pastime? And what would it avail us to put a Stop to all outward gross Pollutions, and Profanations of God's-Day and House; if during the Holy-Day, and even while we are in the Holy Place, we pollute both Time and Place with our foolish wicked Thoughts, and by indulging the wanton Imaginations of our own Hearts.

III. But it is Time, that I proceed to shew, that the Objections against paying due Respects to holy Times and Places, are the same, and are confuted by the same Answers; which is another Proof, that the Dedicating of Holy Times and Places stand upon the same Foot, and must stand and fall together.

I. The first Objection is, that both the Sabbath of the *Jews*, and their Sanctuary or Temple, were Types of the Time, and Person of the *Messias*, and are therefore done away by *Christ's* appearing in the Flesh.

But I can only wonder at the Mistakes of those Men, who use this Way of Reasoning: for certainly no *Christian* Divine pleads for the Observation of the *Jewish* Sabbath, that is, the Observation of the
Saturday,

Saturday, or Seventh Day; nor for the Manner of observing that Day. We acknowledge that that, particular Day, and the Circumstances with which it was observed, was peculiar to the *Jews*, and that Sabbaths as well as new Moons were only Shadows, and that the Body is of *Christ*; that only the moral Part of the fourth Commandment is now binding to us; that is, that a convenient Time be set apart for the Service of God, and *Christ*, and that this convenient Time is especially the Lord's Day, or first Day of the Week. We do not insist on the rigid Rites which were to be perform'd by the *Jews*, but assert, that some Time for divine Worship must be set apart, and that this Time under the Gospel is the first Day of the Week: That some Time must be set apart, we say, is a Principle of natural Religion, and of absolute Necessity in itself; that it should be the Lord's Day we prove, not from the Law of *Moses*, but from the Practice of the Apostles, and the unanimous Agreement of all *Christians* in the best as well as the worst Ages.

When we plead for due Respect to God's Sanctuary, we do not mean for the Tabernacle erected by *Moses*, or the Temple built by *Solomon*; but Places separated for Divine Worship in all Nations where Christianity prevails. We acknowledge

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SERM. that the Temple at *Jerusalem* was a Type
VII. of *Christ*; we know it has been destroy'd
 from its Foundations above 1600 Years
 past; nor do we argue from the Jewish
 Law, but from the Law of Nature, and
 the Practice of *Christ's* Church in all Ages,
 and from the Necessity of the Thing.
 When I took my Text out of the Levitical
 Law, I did it not with a Design to urge the
 Authority of that Law among Christi-
 ans; but have only taken Occasion from
 thence to shew, that the observing religi-
 ous Times and Places is grounded on the
 same Bottom; and that as the *Jews* were
 bound to pay great regard to the Times
 and Places separated for Religion, so are
 we; but not to their Sabbaths, or Sanctua-
 ries, nor in the same manner that they
 did.

2. The other Objection against the pay-
 ing Respect to holy Times, and Places, is
 drawn from God's infinite Nature, who
 cannot be included in any Time, or Place.
 As to Places, the Words of St. *Stephen*
 are commonly alleged, viz. *The most*
High dwells not in Temples made with
Hands, as saith the Prophet *Isaiab*,
 (Ch. lxvi. 1, 2.) *Heaven is my Throne, and*
Earth is my Foot-stool: What House
will ye build me, and what is the Place of
my Rest? Acts vii. 48, 49. and which is
 repeated by St. *Paul*, in other Words,
Acts

Acts xvii. 24. and the same is applicable to Time; for, says the Psalmist, *Psalm* lxxiv. 17. *The Day is thine, the Night is thine, and from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.*

S E R M.

VII.

1. The first Objection to be drawn from these Passages is, that God cannot have a House, because he cannot dwell in it in the manner we do, so as to be excluded from being every where else at the same Time; and so as the old *Heathen* thought their Gods were, enclosed within the Walls of the Temple. *Solomon* was as sensible of this, as the wisest of those that make this Objection; he particularly observes, that even the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God, much less the House which he had made, *2 Chr.* vi. 6. And yet this was as good an Argument against that Temple at *Jerusalem*, as against ours: nay, it was stronger, for this was to be the only Temple for the *Jews*, no other was to be allow'd; and therefore gross People might conceit that God dwelt there only, exclusive of all other Places; but it is impossible, that any can entertain so fond a Notion in a *Christian* Country, where they see a Church at every three or four Miles distance, which are all equally the Houses of God. And the same may be said of Times: God is always equally capable

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SERM. ble of hearing our Devotions, but we are
 VII. not always ready to offer them up in
 our publick Assemblies. We do not
 confine God to Times, or Places, but our-
 selves.

2. From hence it may be infer'd, that we cannot build Temples worthy of God, or such as he deserves. And this is certainly true, and this is what *Solomon*, and *Isaiab*, and *St. Stephen*, and *St. Paul* meant; so neither can we keep Sabbaths so strict, or spend a sufficient Portion of our Time in his Service, for he has a right to all our Time. But the Answer to this is very obvious, *viz.* that when we are unable to give to God what he merits, he graciously accepts what we are capable of giving.

Therefore nothing can be more Irrational than the Zeal of some Men for Sabbaths, and against material Temples. In the last Age of Confusion, and Rebellion, great was the Zeal of Men for the Lord's Day, so great, that they did what in them lay to turn it into a *Jewish* Sabbath: but at the same Time so violent was their Zeal against *Churches*, that they destroy'd many, and turn'd others into Prisons and Stables. They made a great Conscience of ringing more Bells than one at a Time on the Lord's Day, but none at all of defiling God's Houses, and laying them
 in

in Heaps of Rubbish. God defend us S E R M. VII.
from such another *Reformation*. 

Let all from hence learn to avoid equally Profaneness and Superstition. Let us honour holy Times and Places with an equal Hand, without troubling our Heads with *Jewish*, or *Popish* Scruples and Niceties, without using our *Christian* Liberty for a Cloak of Profaneness. Tho' we may on a just Occasion travel, or make a visit on the Holy Day, yet let us not make choice of that Day for such Purposes. And when we are constrain'd to take a Journey on the Lord's Day, let us take Care, that we do not omit the publick Worship of God; and with tolerable Management the taking of a necessary Journey, and the Attendance on the publick Worship, may well enough be reconciled: and when the main Design of the Day is answer'd (which is the publick Worship of God) we shall have less Reason to reflect on our selves for making our Travels, when we cannot help it, on the remaining Part of the Lord's Day. Let us all take Care to have an Awe in our Minds, while the Lord's Day lasts, and especially while we are in God's House, that no wicked or vain Thought possess our Minds, that we don't indulge our Tongues in light, and especially in sinful Words or Actions. But let us not imagine it possible

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SERM. VII. possible wholly to avoid Wanderings of our Minds, or that human Nature is capable of Attending to the Things of God, without any Interruption, and of saying and doing nothing, for a whole Day together, but what directly tends to the edifying and saving of our Souls. Many indeed have affected, and endeavoured to do this; but they have thereby in the event proved, that they attempted Impossibilities, and have by this means in the End only fill'd their Consciences with endless Scruples, and incurable Horrors. Let us always remember, that if there be in us a willing Mind, God accepts us according to what we have.

F I N I S.



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